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VEDANTA KESARI

May, 1961

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.... Be bold and face
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease.
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

THE VEDANTA KESARI

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FROM THE TREE OF DIVINE LORE

That secret and effulgent One, hard to be seen,
That ancient One, concealed deep in the cave,
Who, through devotion (yoga), realizes Him as God
In his own self, that wise one leaves joy and grief behind.

He is not born nor ever dies the Seer
Does not derive from someone, does not become to someone,
From ever this Unborn remains for ever the Old One,
He is not killed, when the body is being killed.

He who, when killing, thinks that he be killing,
And the killed one who thinks that he be dying,
This one and that one, both are erring!
It does not die the one, and does not kill the other.

The smallest of the small, the greatest of the great,
He dwells as Self here in the creature's heart;
Desireless and far from grief, one does behold,
With silenced mind and senses, the Glory of Atman.

Sitting, He yet wanders afar,
Lying, He yet roams everywhere,
Who besides me is capable to know
The heaving up and down of that God?

Seeing the Bodiless within the body,
The Permanent in the impermanent,
The Atman, great and all-pervading,
The wise one does not grieve.

Not through instruction is attained the Atman,
Not by the intellect nor by much learning,
By that one only whom He chooses, by him is He attained,
To Him the Atman does reveal His Nature.

(*Katha Upanishad*, II, 12, 18-23 — retranslated from Paul Deussen.)

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THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

Holy books have a great influence on society. They mould the life and thought, hope and aspiration, duty and conduct of the followers. Books in general also have much influence, but in comparison the scriptures have by far the greater influence. Among them again the basic scriptures are more authoritative. The later holy books base themselves on the former, and are generally the exposition of the truth in them with a special stress on one or two of its aspects. The sacred scriptures are deeply respected in every religion, for they are the revelations of eternal truth and embody the religious and cultural heritage of the people. Every religion has them. While the Semitic religions accept one book being a revelation at a particular point of time, Eastern religions which believe religion to be eternal, generally accept more than one.

The most authoritative book of the Hindu religion is of course the Vedas. In fact, they are so important that a faith or sect is considered *āstika* or 'believer' if it accepts the authority of the Vedas. As a result, though Buddhism and Jainism are varieties of Hinduism and accepted as such are still considered to be *nāstikas,* non-believers. The Vedas are the primary authority. Smritis, Puranas etc. come next to them in importance. The Vedas are said to be the root of dharma — *Vedo dharmamulam.* Other scriptures get validity from them. The word 'Veda' means knowledge or wisdom. Naturally, the Vedas are accepted as impersonal and eternal (*apaurusheya* and *nitya*). They are truths revealed to the Rishis or seers of old. They are called Sruti because they were directly heard from God or learnt through hearing them recited by the preceptor. Sri Sankaracharya defines Veda as 'a book which reveals the knowledge of supernatural methods (*alaukika upaya*) for the achievement of the desired object and avoidance of the undesirable.' Regarding the influence of the Vedas a writer says:

> 'No school of philosophy will be recognized as orthodox, if it is not supported by the authority of the Vedas. The whole life of a Hindu, from conception up to the last funeral rite, has to be sanctified by the recitation of Vedic mantras. From these facts it may easily be conceived how profound has been the influence of the Vedas upon this great and most ancient of the civilized nations of the world.'
>
> (*Cultural Heritage of India,* Vol. I, p. 182.)

The Veda as a book has four parts — Rig-Veda, Sama-Veda, Yajur-Veda and Atharva-Veda. They were taught by Vyasa to Palita, Jaimini, Vaisampayana and Sumanta respectively. *Rigveda Samhita* is the earliest book of the world. It is a collection of nearly 10,500 verses grouped into 1,017 hymns in 10 Mandalas addressed to different deities. The Atharva is the latest Veda where worship of higher gods and popular worship have been blended. Originally only the first three were included as is signified by the name of the Vedas as trayi. Each Veda again is divided into four parts — Mantra or Samhita, Brahmana, Aranyaka and Upanishad, meant to be studied particularly in the four different Ashramas, viz. Brahmacharya, Garhastya, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa. Mantras are hymns to deities, the Brahmanas deal with sacrificial rites to please the gods, the Aranyakas raise the ritual to a philosophical level by reinterpretation and the Upanishads or

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Vedanta are the records of mystical utterances and philosophical thoughts of the ancients. Mantra and Brahmana are called the Karma-kanda and Aranyaka and Upanishads as Upasana and Jnana-kandas, dealing with these particular topics. The auxiliaries of the Vedas are called Vedānga meant for proper cultivation and understanding of the Vedic texts and their application in rituals. They are six in number: Phonetics, Ritual, Grammar, Etymology, Metrics and Astronomy.

The Upanishads are the foundation of the philosophical Hinduism. Their influence is tremendous. There are at present about 250 Upanishads, both ancient and modern, but of them only some are very old. Most of them are however imitation, which fact proves the popularity of the Upanishads. The most important and authoritative are the ten Upanishads on which Acharya Sankara wrote the commentaries. They are Isa, Kena, Katha, Mundaka, Mandukya, Prasna, Taittiriya, Aitareya, Chhandogya and Brihadaranyaka. Kaushitaki, Svetasvatara, Kaivalya, Narayana, Jabala, Nrisimhatapani etc. also are well known. The word 'Upanishad' 'primarily means knowledge or philosophy, and secondarily books relating to it. The Upanishads are also called Vedanta, literally "the end of the Vedas", either on account of their position at the end of certain books of the Vedas or on account of their representing the essence or conclusions of the Vedas. They are also called rahasya, or secret, as only qualified initiates had access to them under the direct guidance of the teacher.'

The principal topics of the Upanishads are the Soul, God and Nature. The identity of the indestructible Brahman and Atman, the unity of existence and the divine heritage of man, the theories of reincarnation and karma, personal and impersonal God, final release and the disciplines for achieving it are the major teachings of the Vedanta. The message of Vedanta is universal, giving us strength, fearlessness and hope and providing us a rationale of morality. It draws our attention to the inner life, and points the goal to be infinity.

The Smritis are the secondary scriptures dealing with religious and other duties. The Dharma-sastras are the lawbooks to guide the members of society. They prescribe dos and don'ts of conduct in tune with the Vedas, changing from time to time. The Samhitas or Smritis of Manu, Yajnavalkya, Parasara and others are very well known.

Valmiki's *Ramayana* and Vyasa's *Mahabharata* are the two immortal epics. They are called the Itihasas. In a way these are the most widely read books of India. Many adaptations and translations of them in different languages have made the stories and the noble qualities represented by different characters familiar to every boy and girl of India, thereby moulding the society. They are so popular because they are the applications of the higher principles presented in the scriptures. Countless other stories, parables, dialogues etc. have been arranged round the main ones. The Gita is thus taken as a part of the Mahabharata.

The Bhagavad Gita is a tremendously influential book. It contains the teachings of Sri Krishna, synthesizing the various spiritual approaches and disciplines. Its place is very high in Indian literature because in 700 slokas it gives the quintessence of the Hindu philosophical ideas.

The Puranas are meant for popularizing religious ideas among the people through stories, legends etc. There are

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18 main Puranas and 18 Upa-puranas. Different Puranas are popular among the followers of different sects. One of the most popular Puranas is the Bhagavata, narrating the different Incarnations of Vishnu. Sri Krishna's life and exploits are fully delineated in this book and is regarded by the Vaishnavas as the most authoritative text. The Devi Mahatmya, which is very popular among the Sakti worshippers, forms part of the Markandeya Purana.

The Agamas narrate the methods of worship according to Saivism, Saktism and Vaishnavism. The Tantras, which are nothing but Agamas, are specially applied to Saktism and Buddhism. While the Agamas are mostly theological, the six Darsanas are philosophical. They are Sankhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaiseshika, Purva Mimamsa and Uttara Mimamsa or Vedanta.

Among the philosophical books of Hinduism, the most authentic is the Brahma-sutra or Vedanta-sutra or Bhikshu-sutra. The main teachings of the Vedanta (or the Upanishads forming the end and aim of the Vedas) are systematized in it. As it was written in a very cryptic, terse form, it gave rise to various interpretations, the chief among them being by Acharya Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva. In four chapters the book points out Brahman as the ultimate reality as shown by the Vedas, meets the objections of opponents, speaks about the discipline and finally about the fruit of knowing Brahman.

In applied spirituality, the most outstanding book of influence is Patanjali's Yoga-sutra. It teaches about the technique of concentration. The eightfold path recommended by it has been accepted as part of spiritual discipline by almost all the religious schools.

The basic books widely studied by serious religious aspirants are the Upanishads, Brahmasutra and the Gita which together are called the Prasthanatraya. Basing the ideas on these basic books coupled with their own realizations, many saints and holy men have produced countless books in different languages. They are widely read and have great influence on the people.

We may now note also the most important scriptures of other religions. The Jains have as their scripture the Agamas. In their different sections like Angas, Upangas etc. they deal with the world-view, doctrine of salvation, monastic rules and discipline, the moral code and the rules for ascetics. Astronomy, astrology, physiology, geography etc. are also taught in them. They were orally transmitted like the Sruti and written in the fifth century A.D.

Similarly the teachings of the Buddha were systematized and recorded later. They are together called the Tripitaka, the three baskets. The Sutra-pitaka includes in five divisions many hundreds of longer and shorter sermons and discourses on the doctrine of the Master and his disciples. The Vinaya-pitaka expounds and explains the monastic discipline. The Abhidharma-pitaka is mostly a later addition and is composed of discussions of doctrinal, philosophical and psychological themes. Among the Mahayana Buddhists the Saddharma-pundarika, Prajna-paramita etc. are very popular. The Dharmapada is a small book giving the essentials of the teachings of the Buddha and is widely read.

The sacred book of the Sikhs is the Adi-Granth. It is a collection of the teachings of the first five Gurus of Sikhism beginning with Nanak who was deeply influenced by Kabir. It includes hymns, prayers, theology and religious teaching. Though many hymns are addressed to different deities,

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this holy book is itself literally worshipped by the followers as the representative of the Gurus.

The Semitic religions are more or less book-centred. The whole religion revolves round a particular book given by the propounder in the form of his teachings. The Bible is the one authoritative book among the Christians, with more stress on the New Testament.

For Judaism the Old Testament and the Talmud are important. The Talmud is an encyclopaedia of Jewish tradition supplementing the Old Testament. Law is its primary concern but religion, ethics, etc. also are discussed in it.

The Koran is the holy book of Islam. In its 114 suras containing 77,639 words are recorded the teachings of Prophet Mohammed received through the angel Gabriel. It urges submission to the one God, and the one faith of Islam which is the way to salvation. The day of judgement, rewards, punishments, laws etc. have been discussed with fervour and with illustrations.

The sacred book of the Zoroastrians is Zend Avesta. The Yasna are records relating to morality, theology and ceremony. The Gathas of Zarathustra belong to this section. There are other sections dealing with invocations, hymns of praise of the divine company surrounding Ahura Mazda, litanies and priestly duties.

Among the Chinese holy books the most famous are the *Analects* of Confucius and his disciples being conversations on moral codes, and the *Tao Te Ching*, the classic of the Taoist school, which is a collection of aphorisms on the nature of the *Tao*, the cosmic ultimate and *Te* and its manifestation through human nature. The two chief books of the Japanese Shinto are the *Kojiki* and the *Nihongi* which are mainly chronicles of ancient times.

These are the main scriptures of the living religions of the world. They along with innumerable other books in tune with them inform the followers of the faith about the higher verities as well as their duties and codes of conduct and thus profoundly influence the life of the people and keep the religious ideas alive in society.

MIGHTY CALL OF VIVEKANANDA

V. N. MURTHY

What are you but children of God,
Sharers of immortal bliss ?
Why are you called sinners, 'tis odd !
Perfect you are, nothing less !

Come up lions, don't fall asleep !
Don't be doubtful, but be sure !
You are not a flock of blind sheep
Let your step be your own, pure !

Come out of your narrow mean holes,
Come, men, have a look abroad !
See, there, nations, rich in world's rolls.
O ! look not back, but forward !

What we want is nerves of strong steel
Muscles of iron and fearlessness !
Weep not more, and start with zeal !
God bestows you all success !

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HOLY BOOKS OF INFLUENCE

[EDITORIAL NOTE : Books have a tremendous influence on man and society. The impact of holy books is still more great. Down the ages men are influenced by them. Through translations and adaptations, they retain their hold on society. Men from their childhood learn the grand truths of life from them. 'The silent influence of books,' said Giles, 'is a mighty power in the world; and there is a joy in reading them known only to those who read them with desire and enthusiasm. Silent, passive, and noiseless though they be, they yet set in action countless multitudes, and change the order of nations.' So there is an urgent necessity of widely acquainting ourselves with the teachings of saints and sages for our own solace and for the improvement of society. To stimulate interest in holy books, information is necessary. For this purpose we have devoted this entire Special issue of the *Vedanta Kesari* to different holy books of influence, leaving out the main scriptures with which we are more or less familiar. In the *Editorial* we have however noticed the different scriptures of the main religions. It is needless to say that though the scriptures are accepted as the supreme authority, the day to day life of the followers is moulded by other books which are easily accessible. Of course, they in their turn imbibed the spirit and often the form too from the scriptures. As a result, they acquire the sanctity of the scriptures, though subsidiary. In this special issue we have included a good number of books, highly respected in the Indian tradition and very widely read. There are so many such books in Sanskrit as well as in other languages that it is not easy to make a selection. However, the present group of books are decidedly very influential and will give an idea of the holy and popular literature. We have restricted our scope by presenting accounts mainly of books of Hinduism. One reason for this is, other religions, specially the Semitic, follow the scripture i.e. one book mainly and no other book comes near it in influence and popularity. In Hinduism, in each sect, a particular book is more honoured, especially among scholars. It is impossible to include all. Moreover, the most widely read holy books in every Indian language are generally the adapted versions of the Ramayana, Mahabharata and Bhagavata. To avoid repetition all of them could not be included. Tamil being an old language and having a rich store of heritage, more books have been included from it. It was not possible to notice the recent holy books. Among them of by far the greater influence is the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna.* Translated in different languages it gives spiritual ideas at their best and caters to the needs of people of all sections, being universal in outlook and providing the essential religious ideas common to every religion. Among other religio-philosophical writers, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Dayananda, Sri Aurobindo and others are widely read.

The contributors to this series are mostly well-known scholars in the particular fields. A few of them have devoted their whole lives to books they write on. The writers have been introduced in the *Notes and Comments.*]

All religious sects have disappeared excepting those that have a Book. Nothing seems to kill them. Some of you have heard of the Parsees. They were the ancient Persians, and at one time there were about a hundred millions of them. The majority of them were conquered by the Arabs, and converted to Mohammedanism. A handful fled from their persecutors with their Book, which is still preserving them. Think of the Jews; if they had not had a Book they would have simply melted into the world, but that keeps them up; the Talmud keeps them together, in spite of the most horrible persecution. One of the great advantages of a Book is that it crystallizes everything in tangible and convenient form.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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MANU DHARMA SHASTRA

Impact of Manu's Teachings on the World

KEWAL MOTWANI *

Manu Dharma Shastra, embodying the sociological teachings of Manu, is the only book in the world that has made the greatest impact on the life of humanity, scattered over the largest part of the globe and over the longest period of time. If the contemporary archaeological research is to be credited with any degree of historical validity and Gobi region in Central Asia is accepted as the original home of Aryan Civilization, the Bharat-Varsha of the Puranas, then the migration of Manu's teachings, claimed to be contemporaneous with those of the Vedas, migrated to all the radial points of the compass, *north* in Russia ; *east* in China, Japan, Formosa, Philippine Islands, down to New Zealand among the Maoris ; *south* to the countries of South and South Asia, India, Iran, ancient civilizations of Sumeria, Egypt, Crete, Babylon, Assyria, and other countries of the ancient Middle East ; and to the *west,* embracing Greece, Rome and other countries of Europe during the Middle Ages, coming down to the Romantist Movement set in motion in Europe with the translations of Indian texts, in the leading languages of Europe, and ending with the Transcendentalist Movement led by the Boston Brahmans in the U.S. of America.

Recent archaeological investigations have revealed the knowledge of *Manu Dharma Shastra* in Mangolia 5000 B.C., and if we accept Ainus of Japan as the remnants of Aryan group that covered the entire sea-board of Eastern Asia ending with Maoris, in New Zealand, where we come across the name and teachings of Manu in some form or other, we shall be on safe ground if we affirmed that the teachings of Manu made some impact on the ancient peoples of these countries.

His name is a household word in India. Manu is known in ancient Iran. Vaivaswat Manu became Vaivahant, and the four well-known groups, known to us in India, were known by absolutely identical names in that country also. The researches in the Sumerian Civilization have brought to light a form of social and cultural organization that resembles very closely with that of *Manu Dharma Shastra,* including the form and method of dispensing of justice. The names of Manu and some of his relations are mentioned in the Library of Assubanipal in Assyria. Manu's name went through a certain change and became Me in Sumeria, Meneus in Egypt, Minos in Crete and Moses in Palestine. All these individuals are law-givers in their respective countries.

Migration of Indo-European tribes, invasions, conquests, commercial, diplomatic and cultural relations and religions of the Mysteries of Mithra and Osris among the pre-Christian tribes of Europe in the West Asia and along Mediterranean region facilitated acceptance of the tradition of Manu as the founder of the European races. Moses, of the Hebrew people, is also a law-giver, as Manu of India, and, according to some French scholars, the social life and thought of the Hebrew people reveals remarkable resemblance with that of the life depicted in the *Manu Dharma Shastra.*

The word Manu became Menes in Greece and Plato based his *Republic* on the teachings of Manu. The tradition of Manu being the founder of the Indo-Aryan tribes in Europe was known among the people as early as 78 A.D. Tacitus, the German historian, mentioned Manu as the founder of the German race ! Greece borrowed every science, humanities and philosophy from India as no doubt did earlier civilisations of Sumeria, Babylon, Assyria, Egypt, Crete and others did. Rome, in

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turn, took all it could assimilate from Greece, and the knowledge of the Code of Manu was instrumental in making the codifiers of the Justinian Code turn to *Manu Dharma Shastra*. H. G. Wells and Sir Paul Vinogradoff, of London, maintain that the Roman jurisprudence is oriental in letter and spirit. They were preceded by an eminent French scholar, Louis Jacolliot, in this assertion.

If the tradition of Manu being the founder of the Indo-European tribes existed in Europe as early as the first century and if the impact of India on Greece and Rome was a fact — and no historian worthy of his name today will deny this — then Manu's teachings continued to influence the life and thought of Europe right from the fall of the Roman Empire in 600 A.D. to the birth of the Romantist Movement at the end of the 18th century. Islam, a religion of the primitive tribes of Arabia, spread over Asia and Europe like a whirlwind, but in its religious, philosophical, scientific and cultural aspects, it was a bridge between India and the West. There is little that is original that was contributed by Islam.[1] What it did not imbibe from India, it took from Greece, Unan, the land of Ionians, which was admittedly the point of confluence between the peoples and cultures of Asia, including India, and the western world. Apart from that, the relationship between India and Europe never ceased. Travellers moved back and forth, some Indian books were translated in Europe, Indian goods were sold in European markets from the time of Roman Empire to the time when Columbus set out to discover a sea route to India. Europe continued to be a commercial and cultural outpost of India and Asia till the discovery of the sea route and the gun-powder turned the tables against India and Asia. The story of the impact of the teachings of *Manu* on European peoples during these ten or twelve intervening centuries is a forgotten page of human history and needs to be written with proper study and research.

But we are on surer ground when we come to the time of the Romantist Movement in Europe in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. A new world of thought burst upon European scholars when Indian texts were translated from Sanskrit into the leading languages of Europe, such as German, French and English. While the discovery of Sanskrit as being the mother of European languages exercised an unending fascination over the European mind, it was forgotten that there might be some similarity of thought and social and cultural institutions among the peoples who were descended from the stock that invented Sanskrit! But the English translation of *Manu Dharma Shastra* by Sir William Jones somewhere around 1790 gave considerable impetus to the study of Manu's social thought. Hegel and Schlegel studied it carefully and lectured in the universities of Berlin and Munich. Karl Marx studied it and refers to it in the course of his writings. Nietzsche held *Manu Dharma Shastra* in high esteem and denounced the Christian thought when making comparisons between the two. In France, Count de Bonald and Count de Maistre propounded a system of social thought based on the teachings of Manu, while St. Simon imbibed a great deal from these two eminent scholars and thinkers and passed on his attainments to his apt pupil, Augustus Comte, chauvinistically described by the western sociologists as the Father of modern Sociology! Comte also studied *Manu Dharma Shastra* and refers to it. Mons. Louis Jacolliot is strongly of opinion that the Napoleanic Code, like its predecessor, the Justinian, was heavily indebted to the *Manu Dharma Shastra* and he proves this by laying side by side many provisions from both and revealing their identity. What influence *Manu Dharma Shastra* exercised on the leaders of the Romantist Movement in the United Kingdom, such as Carlyle, Coleridge, Shelley, Byron,

[1] In the light of history, as we know it by now, the statement attributed to Mr Humayun Kabir, Minister in charge of Cultural and Scientific Development in the Government of India, that Shri Shankaracharya, of the Hindus, borrowed his philosophical ideas from Mohamad is a shockingly perverted reading of history.

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Keats, Burke and others, is not known and deserves careful scrutiny.

Across the Atlantic went an English translation of *Manu Dharma Shastra* to Thoreau and he, after a careful study of it, forwarded it to Emerson who also made a good study of it, as his social writings show. Walt Whitman is also said to have studied it. Among the conventional philosophers, Josiah Royce and Harrison, of University of St. Louis, Mo, came under the influence of Manu's social teachings. How many of the budding sociologists, who received training in Sociology in German and French Universities, came under the direct or indirect influence of *Manu* through their teachers in those Universities, will never be told.

But mention must be made of some of the greatest thinkers of the contemporary age who have made deep and profound study of Manu's teachings. Among these should be mentioned Madame H. B. Blavatsky (Russia), Dr Annie Besant (U.K.), Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Sri Aurobindo and Dr Bhagavan Das (India), Maurice Materlink (Belgium), and Ouspensky (Russia). All these eminent thinkers, occultists and philosophers have studied and propounded the teachings of *Manu Dharma Shastra,* in both the East and the West, and time now is ripe for a general declaration by the whole humanity, 'Back to Manu, or Forward to Manu'. Jai Manava Jai.*

* This subject forms the Second Part, Pages 183-376, entitled 'Manu : A Forgotten Page of Human History,' in the author's *Manu Dharma Shastra : A Sociological and Historical Analysis,* Ganesh & Co. (Madras) Private Ltd., 1958.

YOGA VASISTHA

S. RAJAGOPALA SASTRI

The *Yoga-Vāsistha,* popularly known also as Vasistha Ramayana is one of the most important and inspiring books and is on a par with the Ramayana and the Bhagavata holding a very honoured place among the philosophico-religious books of ancient India. Swami Rama Tirtha expressed its great importance very incisively by saying that it is one of the greatest books ever written under the sun which nobody on earth could read without realizing God-consciousness. The work is not exactly an epic nor is it a philosophical exposition like the Vedanta Sutras. Its great charm lies in its combining both these aspects and teaching great and profound truths in a very popular and appealing manner. It is not so much a closely reasoned system of thought as an inspired teaching of the fundamentals of God-realization. Vasistha who is traditionally regarded as its author, is an inspired and God-realised seer who teaches with a certain directness which enables us to clearly understand the ultimate Reality. The most interesting character of the work is the large number of stories it contains, each story being an exposition of an important principle which makes it easy to remember the teachings without any mental strain. The work contains 32,000 slokas which have a certain graceful style of their own and a literary beauty not inferior to the verses of the great kavyas and even as a piece of literary work, the Yoga Vasistha is a great master-piece.

What is the date of this great book? Scholars like Atreya assign the close of the fifth century A.D. as the probable date of the work and it is likely that this date is correct for we find that many of the minor Upanishads take their material from the Yoga Vasistha. From the time of its composition onwards the book has enjoyed an unquestioned reputation though it seems to have suffered an eclipse in the modern period. The reasons are not far to seek. The Puranas are popular because of their stories and the philosophical classics are carefully studied by their adherents and the

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Yoga Vasistha not being either suffered an unjustifiable neglect.

The Yoga Vasistha has as its central problem the reconciliation between karma and jnana. This becomes clear when we go through the introductory chapter of the work. But we have to note even at the outset that Vasistha is not a Jnana-Karma-Samucchaya-Vadi, in the narrow sense of these terms. The book reminds us of the peculiar type of such stories like the Kadambari of Bana Bhatta, the Kathasaritsagaram, the Hitopadesa, the Panchatantra, and other such works where there are stories within stories necessitating a certain effort to distinguish the strands of the main story. The Author's introduction to this work is as follows : A certain learned Brahman by name Sutikshna is assailed with a grave doubt whether Mukti is possible by karma or by knowledge, or by both. To get a satisfactory answer to this question, he goes to the hermitage of the sage Agasti and puts to him the question. Agasti answers him by saying that both are necessary for the ultimate realisation of Atman, just as both the wings of a bird are necessary for its flight. Either by itself is of no avail. To impress his point, he narrates to Sutikshna the incident of a certain very learned and devout Brahman by name Agnivarma who has a son named Karunya. Karunya feels the same difficulty and the Sruti is unable to help him because it seems to speak with a double voice emphasising in certain places karma and in other places the principle of renunciation. Karunya becomes undecided and keeps quiet without doing any karmas. The father on hearing his son's difficulty narrates to him an incident which he saw and which he hoped would cure his son of his doubt. An apsaras by name Surichi, one day is sitting on one of the peaks of Himalayas when she sees a certain deva messenger passing that way. She asks him wherefrom he is coming and he tells her that a certain saintly king by name Arishtanemi who was offered by Indra the Svarga-loka because of his extreme piety and goodness on hearing from the messenger himself that even Svarga was not free from miseries and that his stay there depended only on his merits refused to accompany the messenger to heaven. Indra who was surprised at this decision of the king instructed the messenger to take him to the hermitage of Valmiki where the sage could teach him how to attain immortal bliss. Valmiki tells the king that he would narrate to him the dialogue between Rama and the sage Vasistha which would have the effect of making the listener, a jivanmukta. This is the rather interesting introduction to this book. The Yoga Vasistha is the record of the dialogue between Rama and the guru Vasistha. The former is obsessed with many serious doubts for which he sees no solutions and it falls to the lot of Vasistha to resolve all his doubts.

Who is best fitted to be a proper adhikari for the spiritual teachings, is always the question discussed by every Sastra and the Yoga Vasistha is no exception. But there seems to be no hard and fast rules in this regard as we have, e.g., in the Vedanta where a rigid set of qualifications is insisted for the aspirant. But according to Vasistha it is enough if one is keenly conscious of the miseries and sufferings in this world and also makes strenuous efforts to escape from these bondages. One must be keen on salvation which is a state of absolute and unqualified Bliss. What is the practical way of escaping from this state of misery and the attainment of salvation ? The first, the best and the only way of attaining this is by the removal of ignorance and this is the same thing as the attainment of wisdom. The state of enlightenment must be followed by strenuous efforts and these must not be hampered in any way by any fatalism or pessimism. Vasistha explains in this connection the principle of fatalism and destiny which seem to have very often a numbing effect on our initiative in any thing. We make our fate and we are responsible for our destiny for these are nothing more than what inevitably happens as the good or bad results of our own previous efforts. Hence it is possible for us to change our destiny by our own individual

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and unrelenting efforts. Hence fatalism need not act as any binding force and make us lapse into passivity which curbs individual effort on our part. We can change our destiny to the better. This is the inspiring message of Vasistha to Sri Rama. The aspirant should have tranquillity, contentment, sadhu-sanga (company of the good and the wise) and he should constantly think on his experience and ponder over the wise advice given to him by the Guru. We must remember that Vasistha's teachings are intensely practical and that they are not aimed at the mere acquisition of knowledge. Realisation is not possible by mere knowledge but must be followed by efforts. Since the emphasis in the teachings of Vasistha is not mere knowledge but only mukti, Vasistha emphasises that there is only one pramana, the means of knowledge, viz., pratyaksa or anubhava. This latter implies integral experience and hence is more comprehensive than mere pratyaksa. Vasistha does not recognise for mukti, other pramanas like upamana, anumana, and other such methods. This is in refreshing contrast to such systems as the Vedanta or Mimamsa where as many as six pramanas are discussed. But for the realisation of the self, it is only experience that is necessary and inferences or implications, at best give us only second hand information about experience in this direction. Vasistha says, 'He alone knows the Absolute Reality who knows it by direct intuition, merging himself in it; others only repeat the words of the scripture'.

Vasistha's doctrine of the world is very suggestive and thought-provoking. Since the ultimate is Pure consciousness, we cannot have a separate and independent factor as the world and hence the world also is mere kalpanāmātra or idea. It is something like a huge dream within the mind. Everything proceeds from the mind, exists in it and finally merges in it. But for all practical purposes, he seems to believe in the objective world. But it is objective not as existing apart from the world, which is really impossible, but only as being the common series of ideas to all of us and being objective only in that sense. The sage extols the function and importance of the mind and makes it almost omnipotent. Things happen forth as the mind of man imagines within itself. It is the mind which makes or mars us. We become what we think. There are many beautiful stories illustrating this point. The unreality of time and space and how what we take for dreams are real experiences happening to us, the ideal nature of the universe, the after-death experience, the existence of worlds within worlds, the mysterious power of thought — all these are well-explained in the two stories of Lila and King Lavana and the Magician. All the central concepts of Yoga Vasistha are admirably taught in the story of Lila.

Vasistha says that all our desires, wishes and even passing thoughts have to be realised. They may not be realised immediately but it is quite clear that realised they must be at some time or other. But our thoughts are potent in proportion to their intensity. What we are is the result of our thought and we become only as we think. Thus it is possible for us not only to make our life happy here but also to be free from the round of birth and death. It all depends on right thinking and right living.

There is a Cosmic Mind which imagines the Cosmos in the same way as individual minds imagine their own dream-worlds. Hence the world is the imagination of Brahma. This cosmic mind is the first evolute of Brahman the Absolute Reality. The cosmic mind has nothing physical about it for it is pure samkalpa. Hence the world that is created by this mind is naturally mental. The Absolute (Para Brahman) cannot be characterised by any positive concept for the reason that it is beyond all characteristics though it is capable of being revealed in our experience. The Absolute Reality is of the nature of pure consciousness. But how do we explain the obvious facts of multiplicity and plurality in the world? These do not really exist in Brahman which is homogeneous and the world is nothing but a mere appearance. It is both real and unreal

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like the river of a mirage observed in the light of the sun. To quote Vasistha, it appears as the snake appears in the rope. Vasistha approves the Maha Vakya, 'Tattvamasi' and says that we are one with the Infinite.

What are the means recommended by Vasistha for the liberation from this bondage? The most essential and the only course is the real knowledge of the Self and nothing but this is capable of getting rid of the fetters of samsara. As Atreya quotes the Author in his book, 'Liberation cannot be attained by living in a forest, undergoing penances, performance or renunciation of any kind of actions, undergoing disciplinary practices, pilgrimages, distribution of alms... yoga, sacrifices, scripture, worship of any god etc.' Liberation cannot be conferred on anybody as a kind of boon unless the individual deserves it by his own right. The God that is to be worshipped is the God that is within all of us. He is to be constantly thought about all the time of our life and in contrast to this form of worship, no worship of any external god is necessary. Vasistha does not seem to attach any importance either to devotion or bhakti to the Lord. Even God cannot give us liberation unless we deserve it. The worship of God brings us only the external factors conducive to liberation. In the case of some who are unable to concentrate on the Primary and the attributeless God, they may, of course worship any god and this has the effect of purifying their minds. Nor does the sage seem to believe that the path of renunciation is necessary for mukti. We cannot renounce action. As long as one is thinking or living he is acting and hence no one can be free from activity. In the story of Queen Chudala, Vasistha tells us that the queen though ruling a kingdom in the absence of her husband, realised the Self while her husband though living in a forest and renouncing everything was not able to attain this condition. External renunciation of things and duties is of no use at all for it is the internal craving for them that has to be abandoned. The busy life of the world need not bind any man if he has renounced the desires and craving for things. Atreya in his book summarises the course which an aspirant should follow in the path of self-realisation.

(1) Practice in deep affirmation of the One Reality. The mind comes to peace by constant meditation on the one Reality. We may meditate on the fact of our being one with the Absolute Brahman, or we may through the realisation of the absolute unreality of objects as other than the self, affirm our being the Absolute.

(2) Control and stoppage of the activity of the pranas. Prana and mind are very intimately related and the control of one will naturally control the other. The activity of the mind must stop and this is possible only by the control of prana.

(3) Control and stoppage of the activity of the mind. To achieve this Vasistha states the necessity of the following steps. The mind must be annihilated through realising its unreality. The negation of the mind is the realisation of the eternal Brahman. The will or imagination must be negated. Imagination is the bondage of the mind and its absence is Liberation. We must cultivate a distaste for the objects of enjoyment. Desire for the objects of pleasure is bondage and giving it up is liberation. We must then renounce all our desires. We must practise eradication of the egoistic feeling, the feeling of individuality. All these steps lead us on finally to Mukti. Vasistha finally gives at great length the characteristics of the liberated man or the Jivan-mukta. It is a very interesting, graphic and stimulating picture of the aspirant who is no longer a mere aspirant but one who has succeeded in realising in his own experience the identity of the Self with Brahman. This realisation is the change of vision brought about by the aspirant himself from that of a finite and limited individuality to that of the absolutely unlimited and infinite Brahman or the Absolute. Objectivity as such is present only when the subject affirms his own private experiences as those emanating from an independent world. But when subjectivity itself is lost as a result of the suppression of the

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activities of the mind, the objective drops out by itself. In the absence of the experience of the objective we have the unique intuitive anubhava of Brahman. It is very much like the destruction of the chitta vritti (the agitations of the mind) which Patanjali says is what is meant by yoga. It is now that the Reality begins to shine and the individual perceives himself as nothing less than the Absolute Reality. Then multiplicity vanishes and in its place we have nothing but the harmony which is the state in which there is neither affirmation nor negation. The limiting experience of the mind disappears and we are straight in the region of the Infinite and we have a peculiar feeling of release and vastness which cannot be compared to anything which we have previously experienced. One thing may be said about it and it is that it is an intensely blissful state, a state not to be identified with the mere absence of pain, but a state of such ineffable bliss that defies all description. This state of bliss has to be differentiated from that of mere physical or emotional or even intellectual happiness. It must be experienced to be understood. The verses in the Bhagavad Gita regarding the sthita-prajna or the state of one who is a jivan-mukta find an echo here in Vasistha's description of the liberated but living individual. As long as the physical body lasts he is the jivan-mukta and after the destruction of the body due to prarabdha karma, he becomes a videha-mukta — one without the physical body. This is the state which is called Mukti, or Nirvana or Brahman. The drop of sea water is now the sea itself.

We thus have in the Yoga Vasistha a complete system expounded and the dazzling brilliance of the similes and metaphors used by Vasistha enables us to understand it in all its concrete setting and we perceive a way of life, a path to a desirable destination and a sure means to eternal bliss. We stand amazed at the immense potentialities of the mind and when Vasistha tells us that the whole world is nothing more than the samkalpa of the mind and that consequently it is as unreal as the fleeting idea, we may feel rather sceptical and believe that Vasistha is very much exaggerating the importance of the manas. The kalpana vada terrifies us with its novelty but reason refuses to take it as anything but a possible way of explaining the world. The relation between the Absolute Brahman and the world, Vasistha explains by a wealth of illustrations and metaphors. But the intellect still gropes in the dark and is unable to understand the logic behind it. It is possible that in these domains, reason is powerless, as Kant has taught in his philosophy. Mystic experience is not amenable to the canons of logic, and visions are very elusive unless we develop the power of intuition. Hence it is unwise to disbelieve in the mystic experiences of the realised souls. With us, philosophy is not the mere investigation of problems nor is it nothing more than the categorising of our experience. Hence an inability to intellectually grasp the teachings of Yoga Vasistha should not lead us to the conclusion that its teachings are illogical. We have to give due place to reason as well as to intuition. Sabda pramana or verbal testimony is with us an accepted creed and in such cases as God-realisation or mukti one has to place belief in the words of people like Vasistha who himself says that as a result of realisation he had arrived at the truth of these teachings. Hence the critical and categorising intellect should not be in a hurry to condemn portions of these teachings as unreasonable before putting them to the test of experience. The Yoga Vasistha is more than a system of thought; it is a darsana showing the path to realisation. It is neither argumentative nor discursive but as Professor Atreya points out it is a vision rather than logic.

The object of the Puranas is to teach mankind the sublime truth in various forms; and even if they do not contain any historical truth, they form a great authority for us in respect of the highest truth which they inculcate. Take the Ramayana, for illustration, and for viewing it as an authority of binding character, it is not even necessary that one like Rama should have ever lived.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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DEVI MAHATMYAM

SWAMI SUDDHASATWANANDA

Among the large number of sacred texts that have influenced the religious and spiritual lives of especially the Hindus, *Devī Māhātmyam* occupies a unique place. This book is also known as *Chandī* or *Durgā Saptasatī* and like the famous Bhagavad Gita, it is also chanted daily by thousands of devout Hindus.

The scriptures of the Hindus are mainly divided into two groups, viz. the Srutis and the Smritis including the Purānas. The main Purānas are eighteen in number and had been composed by some Rishis. They are of much later origin than the Srutis, i.e. the Vedas and some of the Puranas had been named after their authors. Some of them are very popular and are held in high regard, the most famous and popular among them are the Mahabharata and the Ramayana which are especially known as the Itihasas. The Puranas give us very practical directions about religious observances, modes of daily and special worships, origin, significance and glory of many gods and goddesses, etc. They promise suitable rewards to those who observe religious rites and perform worship and thereby are popular among the masses. All the Puranas were written in Sanskrit and most of them have been translated into various Indian languages and some into English. It is not possible to ascertain the dates of all the Puranas, but some of them are very old and were written several centuries before the birth of Jesus Christ.

Devi Mahatmyam forms a part of the famous *Mārkandeya Purāna.* The Markandeya Purana consists of one hundred and thirty-seven cantos of which cantos eighty-one to ninety-three form the Devi Mahatmyam. The great Sanskrit scholar Mr F. Eden Pargitar, who belonged to the Indian Civil Service and who was a Judge of the Calcutta High Court, first translated the whole of the Markandeya Purana into English which was published by the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, in 1904. Sri Manmatha Nath Datta of Calcutta also translated the Markandeya Purana into English.

About the antiquity of this Purana, Sage Markandeya says in Verses 20 to 26 of canto forty-five as follows :

> 'Formerly as soon as Brahmā whose origin is inscrutable, came into being, this Purana issued from his mouth and many Parama Rishis (Great Sages) composed the collections of the Puranas. Sage Chyavana took this Purana from Bhrigu and he declared it to the Brāhmanas, and it was repeated by them to Daksha ; and then Daksha repeated it to me. I will now tell it to thee (Krasustaki) ; it destroys strife and sin. Hear all this from me with composure, O illustrious Muni, as I formerly heard it when Daksha related it.'

About Devi Mahatmya, Mr Pargitar said, 'The Devi Mahatmya stands entirely by itself as a later interpolation', but he could not give any satisfactory evidence to prove his contention except saying, 'Its subject and the character attributed to the goddess, shew that it is the product of a later age which developed and took pleasure in the sanguinary features of popular religion.'

But Sakti Pujā or Devi Puja was in vogue in India even in pre-historic age. The innumerable clay images of goddesses that were discovered in the ruins of Mohenjo-daro of Sindh and Harappa of Punjab, go to prove that Devi was worshipped in those cities even five thousand years ago. Sakti Puja was being performed in the Vedic age also. The Devi-Sukta and Ratri Sukta of the Rig Veda and the Ratri Sukta of the Sama Veda clearly show that Sakti cult was quite popular even then. There is mention of Viswa Durga, Sindhu Durga and Agni Durga in the Rig Veda. In the Kena Upanishad, we find the name of Uma Haimavati. In the Narayana Upanishad also we read, 'I take refuge in Durgā Devi who is the scorcher of foes and giver of fruits of actions.' There are a good number of such examples and they

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clearly go to prove that Sakti Puja is not of later origin.

Three aspects of the Divine Mother have been depicted in the Chandi, viz. Mahākāli in the first chapter, Mahālakshmī in the next three chapters and Mahāsaraswatī in the last nine chapters. They represent the Rig Veda, the Yajur Veda and the Sama Veda respectively and their Chhandas are Gayatri, Ushnik and Anushtup. The three aspects of the Divine Mother also represent the three Gunas, viz. Tamas, Rajas and Sattva respectively.

Some say that the Chandi is of Vedic origin and as if Vedamātā has taken the form of Chandi. Sri Ramakrishna has said that Brahma and its Sakti are inseparable, as fire and its power of burning cannot be separated. Both are one and the same.

As we find mention of Devi in the Vedas, we come across the names of Durga, Kali, Kumari, Chandi, Katyayani and others in most of the Puranas. Even in very old books like the Mahabharata and the Ramayana mention of Her is found. In the 23rd chapter of Bhishma Parva of the Mahabharata, Sri Krishna asked Arjuna to prostrate before Mother Durga and invoke Her blessings before the war. In the sixth chapter of Virāta Parva, Yudhisthira composed a hymn on the Divine Mother and addressed Her as Mahishāsuranāshinī (Killer of the demon in the form of a buffalo) and Vindhyāchalanivāsinī (the Devi who resides in the Vindhya Hill). In the Ramayana also we find that both Ravana and his son Indrajit were devotees of the Mother and even Sri Ramachandra himself worshipped the Divine Mother Durga in the autumn with 108 lotuses just before the war, to invoke Her blessings.

Worship of Mother Chandi and pārāyana of the Devi Mahatmya form an essential part of the Durga Puja which is the greatest national festival of the Bengalees. Though Durga Puja is performed almost everywhere in India in some form or other during the famous Navarātri days, it is most popular in Bengal where it is celebrated with the greatest of pomp and grandeur for four days. It is said that Raja Kamsanarayana, son of Kulluka Bhatta the famous commentator of the Manusamhita, performed Durga Puja in 1580 A.D. spending nine lakhs of rupees in those days. Parayana of the whole of the Devi Mahatmya is done on each of the four days of the Durga Puja.

According to Mr Pargitar and some others, Chandi's origin was somewhere on the bank of the river Narmadā or at Ujjain in Western India. But Prof. Dakshināranjan Sāstrī has proved that Chandi was composed most probably in Bengal between the first century B.C. and third century A.D. Nobody has been able to ascertain a definite date up till now. The famous Bengalee scholar Sarandev quoted many slokas from Chandi in support of some grammatical discussion. Pandit Haraprasad Sastri saw a copy of Chandi at the royal library of Nepal, of the 10th century A.D. Dr Bhandarkar says that in the 7th century A.D. one of the famous slokas of Chandi was written in Gothmongoloid type. The renowned Sanskrit scholars Dandi, Bhavabhuti and Vānabhatta admitted the existence of Chandi in their writings in 7th century A.D. In the 42nd sloka of the 11th chapter of the Chandi, the Devi said that she would be born of Yasodā in the house of Nanda and this leads us to think that Chandi was composed even before the Bhāgavatam. There are mentions of the words 'Mauryya' and killers of Kolas. The Yavanas who started coming to India in the 1st century B.C., were the killers of the Kolas and origin of the Mauryya race also took place in the 1st century B.C. It will not be wrong to conclude according to the above argument that the Chandi was composed in the 1st century B.C. Prof. Bhandarkar, the great oriental scholar has proved with various arguments that Chandi forms an integral part of the Markandeya Purana and it is not an interpolation.

Like Gita, the Chandi has several commentaries. It is said that there are as many as thirty commentaries on the Chandi. Pandit Atmaram, Vyasa, Ekanad Bhatta, Kashinath, Gaudapada, Bhaskara Rai, Ramanand Tirtha are among the commentators and some of their commentaries are even now available in the manuscript form. Shri Venkateswar Press of Bombay had

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brought out a beautiful edition of Chandi with six commentaries of Bhaskara Rai, Nagoji Bhatta, and others. *Devi Bhāsya* of Panchanan Tarkaratna and *Tattva-Prakāsikā* of Gopala Chakravarti, both of Bengal, are very famous and appealing. The name of Sri Gaudapada's commentary was 'Chidānanda Kelivilāsa'. It was mentioned by Bhaskara Rai in his commentary on Lalitāsahasranāma. The commentary of Sri Gaudapada was preserved at Tanjore ; unfortunately, it has been stolen.

Chandi is divided into thirteen chapters and consists of 700 slokas ; so it is called Saptasati. It describes the nature and glory of the Parā Sakti who is also known as Durga, Kali, Devi and others. During Durga Puja, in some places, Saptasati Homa is performed and during that Homa, all these 700 slokas are chanted and with the chanting of each sloka offering is made into the fire.

In the first chapter of the Chandi, we hear sage Markandeya telling his disciple Krasustaki Bhaguri, how Sāvarni, son of Surya became the lord of the eighth Manvantara by the grace of Mahāmāyā. The sage said : In former times, there was a king named Suratha who being defeated by his vicious ministers, retired to a dense forest under the pretext of hunting. He saw there the hermitage of a great sage named Medhas. He also met one merchant there called Samādhi who was dispossessed of his wealth and driven out of home by his wife and children. Though both of them were wronged so much yet their minds were very much disturbed to think of their previous possessions and kinsmen and in order to have some solace, they came to sage Medhas and asked him, 'Venerable Sir, why are our minds still attached to those who have driven us from our houses and have been so rude and unkind to us ?'

The sage replied, 'Men are hurled into the whirlpool of attachment through the power of Mahamaya who makes the existence of the world possible. She draws forcibly even the minds of the wise and throws them into delusion. It is She who when propitious, becomes a giver of boons to human beings for their final liberation (*Saishā prasannā varadā nrnām bhavati muktaye,* I. 56)'. On being asked by the king to let him know more about Her, the sage said, 'She is eternal, embodied as the universe. By Her all this is pervaded. She manifests in manifold ways. When She manifests Herself to accomplish the purpose of the devas, She is said to be born in the world though She is eternal.'

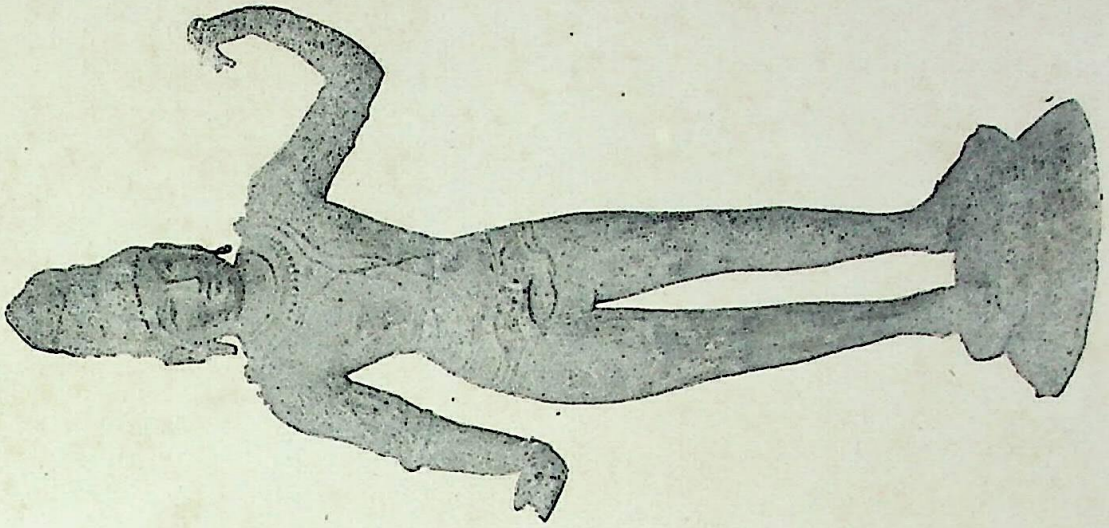
The Rishi then described how when Prajapati Brahma became afraid of the two Asuras Madhu and Kaitabha, he with concentrated mind prayed to the Devi with beautiful mantras in praise of Her. Being pleased, the Devi appeared before Brahma, awoke Lord Vishnu who was in mystic slumber stretching out on Sesha at the end of a Kalpa when the universe was deluged with water, and made the Asuras offer a boon to Vishnu which ultimately became the cause of their death.

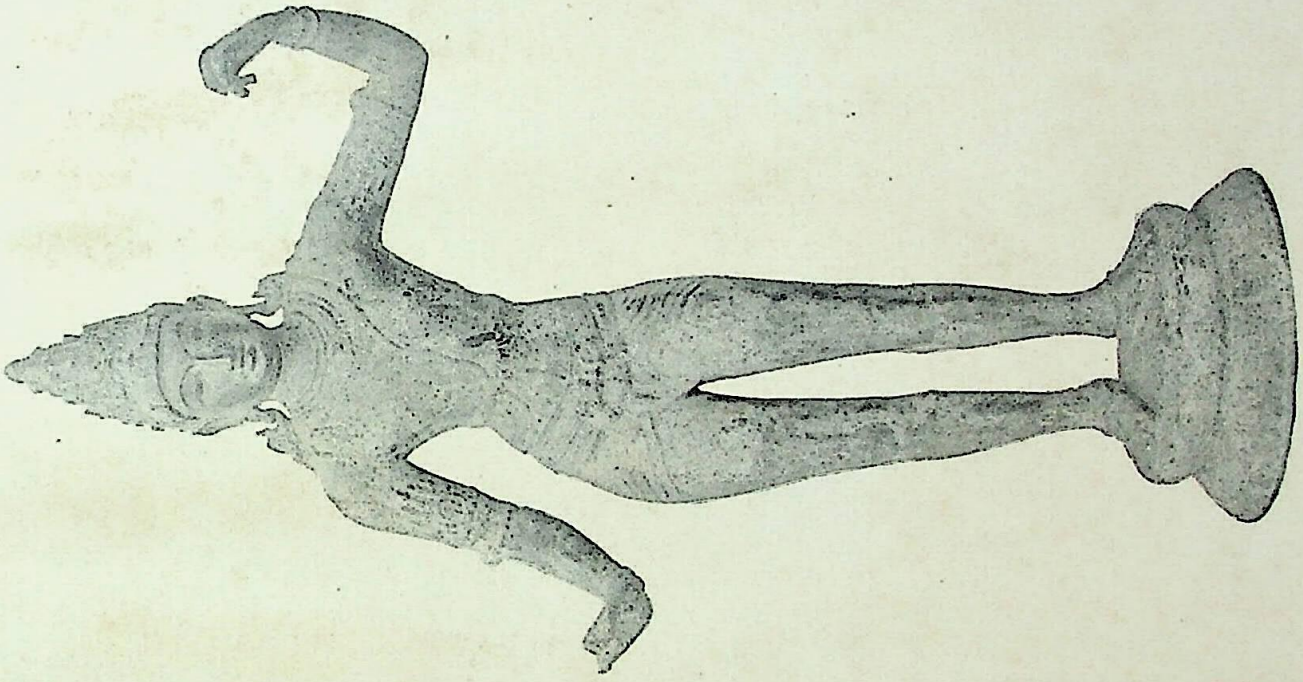
In the 2nd, 3rd and 4th chapters, the Rishi described another aspect and glory of the Devi how she appeared and killed Mahisasura who was then the Lord of heaven after defeating Indra and other devas.

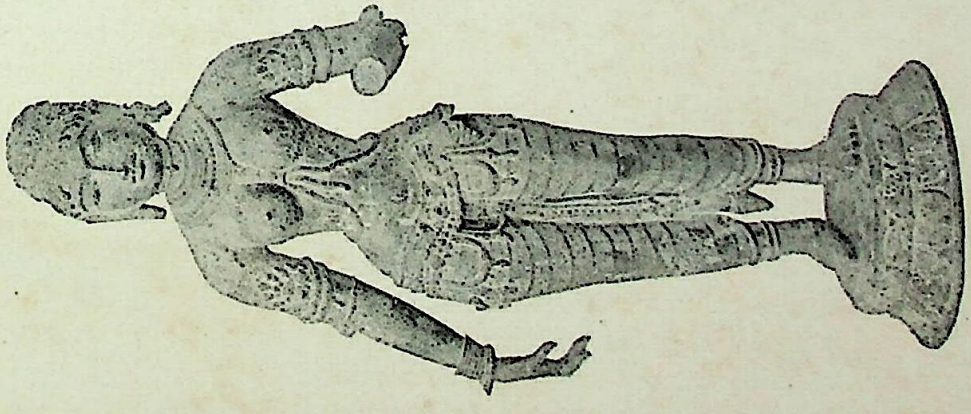
The devas headed by Brahma went to Siva and Vishnu to represent their grievances and the havoc caused by the demon Mahisasura. Both Siva and Vishnu got terribly angry and their faces became fierce with frowns. Then issued forth a great light from their faces. From the bodies of Indra and other devas too sprang forth a very great light and all this light united together which pervaded the three worlds with its lustre and became a female form. The devas presented to her their respective weapons. Bedecked and honoured by the devas with best of jewels, weapons and prayers, the Devi gave out a loud roar of laughter again and again which created great reverberation throughout the world. Mahisasura exclaiming in wrath rushed towards the Devi surrounded by innumerable asuras. The Devi killed all other asuras at ease and jumped and landed herself on Mahisasura, pressed him on the neck with her foot and struck him with her spear. Being caught up under her foot, Mahisasura half issued forth (in his real

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Durga — Mahishāsuramardini

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form) from his own (buffalo) mouth being completely overcome by the valour of the Devi who ultimately killed him. The whole universe heaved a sigh of relief and the sages and the devas praised the Devi. The fourth chapter entitled, 'Praises by Indra and others' is a wonderful collection of divine hymns in praise of the Devi. The minds of its readers are at once filled with heavenly bliss and they feel spiritually elevated. It is said that one can get the whole merit of reading the entire Chandi by chanting only the fourth chapter with devotion.

This form of the Devi killing the Mahisasura is very popular and is seen throughout the country. The wonderful stone carving of the 7th century A.D. at Mahabalipuram near Madras, depicts this beautiful pose of the Devi as Mahisasuramardini (killing Mahisasura).

In the 5th to 13th chapters, the Rishi has described how the Devi appeared in the form of Gauri for the slaying of the wicked asuras as well as Sumbha and Nisumbha and for the protection of the world.

The Rishi says : The Sovereignty of Indra and other devas was taken away by the asuras, Sumbha and Nisumbha by force of their pride and strength. The devas remembered that the Devi had granted them a boon being pleased with their prayer after the killing of Mahisasura saying, 'Whenever in trouble you think of me, that very moment I will put an end to all your worst calamities,' and went to Himavat, the lord of mountain and there extolled the Devi who is the illusive power of Vishnu. They saluted the Devi mentioning her various aspects and names, prayed to her with sincerity and devotion and reminded her of her promise to rescue them whenever they would be in danger. Being pleased with the prayer, the Devi appeared before the devas as Ambika, assured them and first killed Dhumralochana, Chanda, Munda and Raktavija, the great generals of Sumbha and Nisumbha and ultimately slew them also in a very severe battle.

After the asuras were killed, the whole universe became happy and regained perfect peace. Being relieved of all anxieties and overjoyed, Indra and other devas led by Agni, started praising the Devi in beautiful terms in the eleventh chapter entitled Narayani Stuti. There is a eulogy of this hymn in the Lakshmi-tantra where Lakshmi tells Indra the wonderful results of chanting it.

Being immensely pleased with the prayer of the devas and being requested to grant further boons, the Devi assured them saying how she would appear in different forms from time to time and kill the asuras.

In the 12th chapter the Devi eulogises the merits of Devi Mahatmya. After hearing the Devi Mahatmya with devotion from the sage Medhas, the King Suratha and the merchant Vaishya retired to the forest and there making a clay image of the Devi, they both worshipped her, offered sacrifices and practised severe austerities. Being thus propitiated, the Devi appeared before them and fulfilled their desires. The Devi Mahatmya ends with the bestowing of boons by the Devi to the king and the merchant.

As we have said before, the fourth chapter is the most important one and next in importance, are the eleventh and the fifth chapters. Those who cannot read the whole of the Devi Mahatmya, should read at least the above three chapters.

There are three Kavachas and three *Rahasyas* and they are called the Shadanga (six limbs) of the Devi and there are also the famous *Devi Suktam* and the *Aparādhakshamāpana Stotra,* i.e. hymn praying for forgiveness of sins committed during chanting the Chandi for wrong pronounciation, etc. All the above should also be read by one who makes the full parayana of the Devi Mahatmya.

Before starting the Parayana of the Devi Mahatmya on ceremonial occasions, Goddess Chandi and the book containing the Mahatmya should be worshipped.

There is a strong belief that if the Chandi is chanted correctly and regularly following the directions of parayana, the Divine Mother protects the readers from all calamities and fulfils all their desires and may even grant salvation.

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LALITA SAHASRANAMA

'ANNA'

I

Just as Veda Vyasa has placed the Bhagavad Gita which is the quintessence of the Upanishads in the heart of the Mahabharata, he has placed the *Lalitā Sahasranāma* which is the quintessence of the Mantra Sastra in the heart of the Brahmanda Purana. It occupies the same important place and enjoys the same popularity in the field of Sri Vidyā as does the Bhagavad Gita in the field of Brahma Vidya or Vedanta.

Of all the Bhāshyas or commentaries that have helped to popularise it, the one written by Bhāsurānanda-nātha, more familiarly known as Bhaskara Roya, is the one most widely known. The other Bhashyas, not yet available in print, are said to be by Vidyaranya Muniswara, Vimarsananda-natha and Bhattanarayana. Bhaskara Roya lived from 1690 to 1785 A.D. Among his works, the Saubhāgya Bhāskara (Lalita Sahasranama Bhasya), Varivasya Rahasya (a treatise on Panchadasākshari) and Setu Bandha (a commentary on Nityā (Shōdasikārnava) constitute, as it were, the Prasthāna Traya of Sri Vidya. Bhaskara Roya was born in Maharashtra. He migrated to Tanjore, won the esteem of the rulers of the place and settled down at a place near Tiruvalangadu on the banks of the Cauvery, where lived his Guru, Gangadhara Vajapeyi. This is the place now known as Bhaskararajapuram.

Originally, Bhagavan Hayagriva gave this Sahasranama to Maharshi Agastya after teaching him the mode of worship of Lalita Parameswari through Antar Yāga, Bahir Yaga and Maha Yaga and after giving him the Sahasranamas of Mantrini and Dandini. He says that as Sri Chakra is the most important of the Yantras, and as Lalita is the most important of the Divine Mother's forms, this one is the most important of the Sahasranamas. In other Sahasranamas, we find the use of particles such as *eva*, *cha*, etc., and the repetition of a name twice, thrice or four times, but here there are no such faults. From the fifty-one letters of the Sanskrit alphabet, thirty-two are selected to begin the names and it is said that these letters are specially auspicious. The *Suta Samhita* says :

> 'I adore Her who has divided Herself into thirty-two letters.'

This Sahasranama was originally composed by the deities presiding over speech at the command of the Divine Mother Herself in an assembly of gods. After listening to it, the Mother said, 'Let one formally worship Me or not, let one repeat the Sri Vidya or not, but let a devotee never miss the chanting of this Sahasranama'. It is declared that its chanting will cure diseases, will grant the fulfilment of cherished desires and endow the devotee with long life. If one is bathed in water consecrated by its repetition, it will free one from all afflictions. A recent writer in the *Vedanta Kesari* observes :

> 'The claim made in the phalasruti that this hymn is a unique one is not really an exaggeration (*anena sādrisam stōtram na bhūtam na bhavishyati*). There is no mental complex or psychic confusion which is not removed by chanting this hymn (*yat pāpam jāyate pumsām tat sarvam nasyati dhruvam*). It may be observed that persons chanting this hymn need not concentrate like those doing japa. Even if their mind is wandering (and the minds of persons suffering from psychic confusion are always found to be wandering), the effect of chanting will not in any way be diminished for it works on the unconscious mind directly.'

If a worshipper invokes the Devi by particular names, such as Kāmadāyinī (fulfiller of desires), Annadā (giver of food), Vasudā (giver of wealth), Sarva-vyādhi-prasamanī (destroyer of all diseases), Sivajnāna pradā-

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yinī (bestower of the knowledge of Siva), the results corresponding to the ideas signified by the names will accrue to him. If one is altogether free from desires and chants the Sahasranama, as a mere act of devotion, one will have unalloyed bliss and attain freedom from the bondages of life. These are not simple ordinary names but every name is a Mantra and the whole series is a Mālā mantra. The chanting is considered to be specially efficacious on Fridays, on Navami, Chaturdasi, and full moon and during the nine days of Navarātri.

The Devi is to be meditated upon as of a ruddy complexion, with eyes expansive as an ocean overflowing with waves of grace, with noose, goad, arrows of flowers and a bow of sugarcane in her hands, surrounded by Animā and other deities and ultimately as one's own Self.

The story of Her Avatara is this : When Kāmadeva had been burnt into ashes by the flash of anger from Siva's third eye, the Devas pitied him and putting together his ashes in a human form, they prayed to Siva that he should be revived. The form then came to life but it was not Kamadeva. It was Bhandāsura, the very reverse of Kama, terrible in body and mind. He made men as well as gods lose their Veerya and the life of every one miserable. He built an empire with Sonitapura as his capital and persecuted the Devas. Narada advised Devendra to worship Parā Sakti. Devendra did so and performed a sacrifice. From the sacrificial fire, arose Lalitā Mahā Tripurā Sundari (*Chidagnikunda-sambhūtā, devakārya-samudyatā*). The Devas celebrated her wedding with Parameswara and on the union of Siva and Sakti, the whole world became filled with joy. After the union, Kamadeva came to life again through the grace of the Mother (*Kamasanjivanaushadhih*) though in a form unseen by others. A palace for the Mother was built by the gods on the top of Mahā Meru. In due course, she led her forces against Bhandasura and destroyed him (*Kameswa-rāstra-nirdagdha sabhandāsura-sūnyakā*).

II

The Sahasranama begins with a description of the Devi's form from head to foot as one of enrapturing and limitless beauty. 'Her dark hair is fragrant by nature, the Kasturi-tilakam shines on her forehead, her eyes are like fish playing in an ocean of loveliness, her nose-screws are like stars and her ear-rings like the sun and the moon ; her cheeks are like polished gems, her lips red like coral, her voice sweeter than the notes of Vina ; her smile captivates the heart of Siva ; a crimson saree adorns her form ; the nails of her feet shine like a row of gem-set lamps removing the darkness of ignorance from the hearts of those who make obeisance to her ; she is seated on the left thigh of Kameswara.' The other topics dealt with are the description of Sri Nagara which is her abode, the destruction of Bhandasura, her identity with mantra, her form as Kundalini, her granting of boons to devotees, her Nirguna aspect and Saguna aspect, her form as Kshetra and Kshetrajna, her Peetas and the attendant deities, her ascent and descent through six chakras, her Vibhutis or glories, the harmony of the various paths of worship and her union with Siva.

Of the thousand names, some indicate the different states of human experience as waking, dreaming, deep sleep and Turiya (256-259) ; some signify the other attributes of Jiva (455) ; some signify immovable things like the earth (718) ; some are attributes of qualified Brahman (838) ; some indicate different aspects of Devi (313) ; some denote the actions performed by her (65-82) ; some denote the unconditioned Brahman (806). In this way, the names comprehend all things human and divine, here and hereafter, the Saguna and Nirguna. Some of the names explain Tantric symbolism and some are flashes of poetic intuition revealing vast vistas of mystic knowledge. When Daityas sprang into existence from the Sarvasurāstra of Bhandasura, the ten avatars of Vishnu appeared from the finger nails of the Devi and destroyed the Daityas (*karānguli-nakhotpanna-nārāyana-da-*

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sākritih). The bow of sugar cane which she carries is the human mind (11) and the arrows are the five subtle-elements (12). She is without pride and she destroys pride; she is without sin and destroys sin, is without anger and destroys anger, is without greed and destroys greed, is without doubt and destroys doubt, is without difference and destroys difference. She is the triad of knowledge, knower and known (256), she transcends virtue and vice (255) and she has nothing to avoid or accept (304). She it is who creates the worlds in the form of Brahma, protects as Vishnu, destroys as Rudra, absorbs as Isvara and blesses as Sadasiva (264-273). The dust of her lotus feet forms the vermilion mark on the forehead of the goddess who presides over the Vedas (289). The bliss of gods from Brahmā downwards is like a drop in the ocean of joy which her realisation brings (365). The one only Devi assumes manifold forms as Kamala, Saraswati etc. corresponding to different functions; she is Gāyatri, Vyāhriti, Sāvitri and Sandhyā (420-422). In the Visuddhichakra, she is Dākini with one face, in the Anāhata she is Rākini with two faces, in the Manipura she is Lākini with three faces, in Svādhishthāna she is Kākini with four faces, in Mulādhāra she is Sākini with five faces and in Ājnā she is Hākini with six faces, the faces revealing the mystery of the emergent evolution of the five tanmātras and the mind. Residing in the head, she is moonlike in lustre, in the forehead like a rainbow, in the heart like the sun and in the solar plexus as fire (591-597). She is not pleased with those who worship and perform sacrifices out of vanity; she destroys their deeds as she did the sacrifice of Daksha (600). She is the meeting ground of Jiva and Siva (672), the immanent and the transcendent. She can be worshipped only by those who are capable of introspection and is difficult of attainment by extroverts. She can be known even by little children and unsophisticated people like cowherds through love and devotion (994). She is Siva and Sakti in one (999). Such is Mother Lalita who is so called because she sports (*lalate*) in and through all the worlds. The word Lalita has eight meanings, viz. brilliancy, manifestation, sweetness, depth, fixity, energy, grace and generosity and the Sahasranama elaborates all these qualities.

III

There is no restriction that Sakti should be worshipped in female form alone. She can be worshipped in male form too (*pum-rūpam vā smared devi stri-rūpam vā vichintayet; athavā nishkalam dhyāyet chidānanda-lakshanam*). In reality there is no gender in Godhead. The one Sakti appears in four aspects as Bhavani, as Vishnu, as Kali and as Durga (*bhoge Bhavānī purushe cha Vishnuh kope cha Kālī samare cha Durgā*). She appears both as Saguna and as Nirguna. Uma tells her father Himavan: 'In whatever form you wish to meditate on me, you may do so (*yadeva rūpam me tāta manasō gocharastava, tannishthastatparō bhūtvā tadarchana-parō bhava*).' The beautiful form in which Sri Krishna played in Brindavan is described as that of Lalita herself (*kadāchit Lalitesāni pumrūpā Krishna-vigrahā*). And again, just as Sri Krishna who played on his flute and sported with the Gopis appeared in his Viswarupa before Arjuna in a terrible form with flaming and wide open mouths devouring the worlds (*kālōsmi lōkakshayakrit*), Lalita who is auspicious, who showers joy and blessings, who is beautifully attired (*sumangalī sukhakarī suveshādhyā*) has another aspect striking fear in the hearts of those human beings who live like animals (*pasu-loka-bhayankarī*) and destroying the wicked (*Chandamundāsura-nishūdinī*). Unless one understands this dual aspect, one does not fully understand her. Says Sri Aurobindo:

> 'Terrible is her face to the Asura, dangerous and ruthless her mood against the haters of the divine, for she is the warrior of the worlds who never shrinks from battle. Her hands are outstretched to strike and to succour. Her love is as intense as her wrath and she has a deep and passionate kindness. But for her, what is done in a day might have taken centuries; without her,

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> Ananda might be wide and grave or soft and sweet and beautiful but would lose the flaming joy of its most absolute intensities.'

The Divine Mother not only creates and sustains but also destroys. Her divine hand is everywhere, in birth as well as in death, in health as well as in disease, in peace as well as in warfare, in the bloom of youth as well as in the wrinkles of age, in the blush of the maiden as well as in the careworn face of the senile, in the sweet zephyr as well as in the terrific typhoon, in the liquid beauty of the full moon as well as in the pitchy darkness of a cold wintry night. It is therefore said in the *Devimahatmyam* :

> 'She is the goddess Lakshmi reigning in the house of the fortunate and she is again the ill luck in the house of the sinner. She is the intelligence of the wise, the faith of the pious and the modesty of the virtuous.'

With this integral understanding and an awakened consciousness, the Divine Mother should be worshipped in every heart, in every house, in every village and town and forest *(pūjanīyā janair-devī sthāne sthāne pure pure grihe grihe sakti parair-grame grame vane vane).*

IV

Brahma Vidya and Sri Vidya constitute, as it were, the theoretical and the practical aspects of spiritual science. Sri Vidya elaborates the paths of religious practice through which the truths of Brahma Vidya may be realised and experienced. Mantra, Yantra and Tantra form the three corners of the triangle of Sri Vidya. Mantra is visualized in the Yantra. The worship of the Yantra internal and external, the practice of Kudalini Yoga and other Sadhanas constitute the Tantra. The chief Mantra of Sri Vidya is Panchadasākshari, the chief Tantra is the meditation on the identity of Mantra, Yantra and Tantra with Para Sakti herself. For attaining success in Mantra yoga, the Yantras and Tantras are useful aids. Sri Ramakrishna treated his own body as the best Yantra. Sri Vidya is like an ocean into which flow the different streams of religious thought which take their rise in the Himalayas of Sanatana Dharma. An adept in Sri Vidya can be a Sakta at heart, a Saiva in outlook and a Vaishnava in practice (*antah sākto bahih saivah vyavahāreshu vaishnavah*). That such a reconciliation is not only possible but is necessary for a true religious life will be understood by all those who practise the worship of Gayatri through Sandhyavandanam which is but a variant of Sri Vidya. Arjuna, the hero of the Mahabharata, is an ardent worshipper of Siva, a devoted friend of Sri Krishna and an Upāsaka of Devi. On the field of Kurukshetra, before the battle commenced, he got down from his chariot and prayed to the Divine Mother Durga for success (*stutāsi tvam mahādevi visuddhena antarātmanā; jayō bhavatu me nityam tvat prasādād ranājire*).

Followers of Sri Sankara practise a harmony of faiths through Panchāyatana Puja. In the Maths established by Sankara, the worship of Sri Chakra and the practice of Sri Vidya form integral parts of the traditional religious discipline. In works like *Prapanchasāra, Saundaryalahari* and *Trisatibhāshyam,* Sankara has propagated Sri Vidya.

Mother worship thus understood is a synthesis and harmony in which diverse and sometimes conflicting tendencies of human endeavour have been accommodated and each in union with the rest has been assured its fullest development and satisfaction. This has been exemplified in our own times in the life of Sri Ramakrishna, the Avatar of the age. He has proved that all paths pursued with devotion lead to the one God, that Mantras are efficacious, that Yantras are potent, that Devatas and higher powers exist, that Siddhis do come and that step by step the Divine Mother leads the Sadhaka to higher and higher levels of perfection till he reaches the goal.

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MAHANIRVANA TANTRA

M. P. PANDIT

There is a tradition that in the Krita Yuga life was sustained on the marrow, in the Treta on the bone, in the Dvapara on blood and in the present Kali Yuga life is dependent on food, *annagataprānāh*. The form, strength and longevity of men in the first Age was something gigantic and each successive age has registered a marked diminution. Corresponding to the need and capacity of the human beings different ways of life were enunciated in each Age in different Scriptures. Shruti, the Veda with its elaborate ritual and profound esoteric discipline was prescribed in the Krita Age, the Smriti with its methodised and codified content in the Treta, the Puranas and kindred books in the Dvapara and, it is declared in the Tantras, the *Agamas* are the declared Scripture for our current age when

> "Dharma is destroyed, an age full of evil custom and deceit. Men pursue evil ways. The Vedas have lost their power, the Smritis are forgotten, and many of the Puranas, which contain stories of the past, and show the many ways to liberation .. will be destroyed. Men will become averse from religious rites, without restraint .... Vipras will live like Shudras, and whilst neglecting their own *sandhya* will yet officiate at the sacrifices of the low. They will be greedy.... averse to all *tapas* and *vrata* .... The only sign that they are Brahmanas will be the thread they wear." [1]

The Tantras constituting the literature of the Agamas are many, but the essence of their Wisdom and Teaching, it is claimed, is given in the *Mahānirvāna Tantra* :

> O Deveshi, I will state before Thee the very essence distilled from the Vedas and Agamas, and in particular from the Tantras. As men versed in the Tantras are to other men, as the Jahnavi is to other rivers, as I (Shiva) am to all other Devas, so is this Mahanirvana Tantra to all other Agamas.[2]

The *Mahanirvana Tantra,* as now available, consists of over 2,500 verses in fourteen chapters, purporting to be the replies given by Lord Shiva to the Devi, Parvati, on Mount Kailas, in answer to her urgent queries regarding the most appropriate Sastra for men in the Kali Age. These fourteen chapters, it is said, constitute only a third of the full text of the Tantra, the remaining portions not being available for publication. In the course of an introduction to his edition[3] of the text, Sir John Woodroffe refers to a complete manuscript about 500 years old lying with a Nepalese Pundit which he was permitted to copy out but prohibited from publishing the later portions of *Shatkarma Mantras*. This unpublished part of the Mss., he informs, is double the published text. However, even the first part that is printed covers a wide field of the inner and outer life of the individual and his society. Written in simple language the verses have been commented upon by eminent Tantric scholars, the chief among them being Hariharananda.

The Instruction begins on the high note of the Supreme Reality that is Brahman, the One without a second, who is also the Lord of All, ever-full and self-manifest, the Goal of all roads in life and after-life. He is, declares the Tantra, the 'Cause of all beings, the Manifestation of whose creative energy in the three worlds is called Brahma. By His will Vishnu protects, and I (Shiva) dissolve. Indra and all other Guardian Devas of the world depend on Him and hold rule in their respective regions under His command... Through fear of Him the Wind blows, the Sun gives heat,[4]

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[1] *Mahanirvana Tantra,* I.

[2] *Ibid.,* II. 29, 30.

[3] The first edition of this Tantra to be published was in 1876 in Bengali script by the Adi Brahma Samaja. It was followed by other editions in due course. The text consulted and used for our present study is the one edited, translated and annotated by Sir John Woodroffe and first published in 1913. It contains the commentary of Hariharananda. Currently it is running its third edition under the auspices of Ganesh & Co., Madras 17.

[4] MNT. II. 40-44.

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the Clouds shower seasonable rain and the Trees in the forest flower.'[5] He the Supreme is to be worshipped, contemplated upon for Liberation. For one who can so dwell upon Him with adoration of his entire being, what need is there of ritual, *nyāsa* or *mudrā*?

The Brahman is to be meditated upon and invoked. And for that purpose the Mahanirvana gives the Mantra, the Word of Call : *Om Sac-Cid-Ekam-Brahma*,[6] Om, the One Being Consciousness Brahman. For this Mantra, says the text, there is no need of the normal precautions and procedure of deciding whether the Mantra is friendly or inimical etc. nor is it necessary to go through the usual *samskāras* like *janana, tādana, bodhana* etc. It is enough if it is received from a competent Guru.[7]

The meaning of the Mantra is next explained. For, it is pointed out, 'for him who has no knowledge of the meaning of, nor of the awakening of the Mantra, it is fruitless, even though it were inwardly uttered ten million times.'[8]

A — Protector of the world
U — He who dissolves it
M — The Creator
Sat — Eternal changeless Being
Chit — Consciousness
Ekam — One without a second
Brahma — What is Vast (*brihatvat*)[9]

Giving the genesis of the Mantra, the Tantra observes :

> The presiding Devata of the Mantra is the omnipresent, eternal, inscrutable, formless, stainless and ineffable Brahman.
>
> When introduced by the Bija of Saraswati (*aim*), or by the Bija of Maya (*hrim*) or Bija of Kamala (*shrim*), instead of Om, it bestows various kinds of learning, or Siddhi in Maya or prosperity in all quarters.[10]

This is the *Mula Mantra* around which the Worship of Brahman, Brahma Sadhana, is built up as described in the succeeding portions. With all its stress on the external ingredients of the ritual, the Tantra declares in unambiguous terms :

> In the worship of the supreme Lord there is no need to invoke Him to be present or to desire Him to depart. It may be done always and in all places. It is of no account whether the worshipper has or has not bathed .... But the Supreme Spirit would ever be worshipped with a pure heart.[11]

In the worship of the Supreme Brahman there is no other rule but the felt inclination, *icchāvidhi*, of the worshipper. He must be

> 'a listener ever to things divine, a meditator ever on the Brahman, his mind ever turned to the search for Brahman. With strength of determination holding his mind in close control, he is ever conscious of the nearness of Brahman.'[12]

Associated with the Brahma Mantra in this Sadhana is the Brahma Gayatri which reads :

Parameshwarāya vidmahe paratattvāya dhimahi tanno brahma prachodayat.

It may be rendered in English as :

> May that Brahman whom we know and meditate upon to attain the Supreme Lord, the Supreme Reality, may He activate us.[13]

The Brahman, however, can be approached not merely as the Lord, Parameshwara, but also as Parameshwari, the Supreme Shakti. For She is none else but Himself in another poise.

> 'Thou art the very Para Prakriti of Brahman, the Paramatma, and from Thee has sprung the whole Universe, O Shiva, its Mother.'[14]

She is the matrix of all that exists :

> 'Whatever there is in this world of things which have and are without motion, from Mahat to an atom, owes its origin and is dependent on Thee.'[15]

In common with many other texts in the Tantric tradition the *Mahanirvana* declares :

> 'Though in Thyself formless, yet Thou hast form. For the helping of the worshipper, the good of the

[5] *Vide* Katha Upanishad, VI. 3.
[6] ॐ सच्चिदेकं ब्रह्म ।
[7] MN.T. III. 16.
[8] MN.T. III. 31.
[9] *Ibid.*, III. 32-34.
[10] *Ibid.*, III. 37-38.
[11] *Ibid.*, III. 77-78.
[12] *Ibid.*, III. 101.
[13] MN.T. III. 109-110.
[14] *Ibid.*, IV. 10.
[15] *Ibid.*, IV. 11.

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world, and the destruction of the Danavas, Thou dost assume various forms.' [16]

And it goes on to prescribe the best mode of worship, a swift course of sadhana for man to effect his liberation from Ignorance and achieve union with the Supreme Consciousness that is She.

It is known that the Tantras have generally three kinds of sadhanas, *āchāras,* for the three categories of sadhakas into which men are classified by them according to their temperament viz. Pashu Bhāva, Vira Bhāva and Divya Bhāva. Now, the text declares that in

'this Kali Age there is no Pashu Bhava; Divya Bhava is difficult of attainment. But the practices relating to Vira sadhana yield visible fruit.' [17]

It is not practicable in this age to go through all the elaborate outer ritual demanded of the Pashu achara, like collecting all the ingredients with one's hands etc. Nor is it reasonable to expect men in this age of degeneration of physical, mental and spiritual faculties, to act in the way of the gods.[18] Hence the Virachara, the Kaula Marga, Worship of the Divine Mother is enjoined upon all born in the Kali Yuga.

In this Path of the Kaula (worshipper of the Shakti), man is not called upon to renounce his rightful share in the joy and glory of life. By participating in it he does not forfeit his claim for liberation from the *māyic* quagmire of falsehood, evil and death. The Kaula doctrine and its practice give the key to the reconciliation of both the joy of life and the Ananda of release into the freedom of the Spirit. The sadhaka cultivates, develops and progressively realises in himself the vision of the Divine Mother, the Supreme Shakti, as embodied in all things that are manifest for the varied delight of Her Lila. She manifests Herself multitudinously and sports in the richness of Her creation from a million centres of enjoyment. By a progressive identification of his own consciousness with this larger Consciousness of the World-Mother, the sadhaka participates in the Lila, has the joy of things and in that very process of self-identification and merger grows into the nature of the Divine Mother. All the elements that make for the sustenance, growth and luxuriance of life are drawn upon in their acme and used toward this fulfilment. This in brief is the rationale underlying the Shakti worship.

The Mula Mantra for worship of the Shakti is the ten-lettered Vidya :

Hrim shrim krim pa-ra-me-shva-ri svā-hā.[19] The text goes on to mention certain other Mantras that arise by modification, such as the seven-lettered *parameshwari svāhā,* the *sixteen*-lettered *shodashi* etc.[20]

This Shakti Mantra is expected to be used in the practice of the Shakti Sadhana with Kulachara rites in which enter the famous five elements, the *pancha makāras.* But these are not to be used without an elaborate and exhausting ritual of purification, equipment of oneself psychologically and physically. It is only when one rises in his consciousness above the animal level and functions as a representative of the Shakti that one can truly enter into the spirit of the sadhana and perform fruitfully. It is an important part of the ritual to 'burn up the sinful inclinations of the body', to burn the *pāpa purusha* before stepping into the central ritual with a 'new born Deva body', *deham navinam devatāmayam.*[21]

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[16] *Ibid.*, IV. 15.16

[17] *Ibid.*, IV. 19.

[18] 'The Pashu must with his own hand collect leaves. flowers, fruits and water, and should not look at a Shudra or even think of a woman. On the other hand, the Divya is all but a Deva, ever pure of heart, and to whom all opposites are alike, free from attachment to worldly things, the same to all creatures and forgiving. How can men with the taint of this Age upon them, who are ever of restless mind, prone to sleep and sloth, attain to purity of disposition?' (MN.T. I. 55-57).

[19] MN.T. V. 10-13.

[20] Eight-lettered, *ashtakshari mantras* : *klim parameshvari svaha; aim parameshvari svaha; om parameshvari svaha.*

sixteen-lettered : *Hrim shrim krim parameshvari Kalike Hrim Shrim Krim Svaha.*

The above when prefixed by the *bija* of *vadhu* (strim) or by *pranava* (om) becomes the seventeen-lettered.

(MN.T. V. 15-18).

[21] *Ibid.*, V. 103.

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Details of the worship of the Devi with form and without form, worship internal and worship external, are given in utmost detail. We would only quote a few of the typical utterances which emphasize the importance given by the ancients to internal readiness, the psychological purity[22] of the aspirant in the sadhana :

> In the making of the kalasha all *miserliness* should be avoided, since it is fashioned for the pleasure of the Devas. (V. 183)
>
> Considering the Wine to be the Devata flowers should be offered with Japa of the Mula Mantra.. wine should be always thus purified. (V. 205-206)

While offering the cup to the Supreme Shakti the sadhaka should feel and repeat : 'I offer as oblation into the Fire of the Supreme Self the excellent nectar of Thisness (idantā) with which the cup of I-ness is filled.' (VI. 42)

It is necessary to note that for those who are of a weaker fibre of mind and spirit the Tantra enjoins in unequivocal terms :

> 'In the case of the householder whose mind is entirely engrossed with domestic desires, the three sweets should be substituted in the place of the first element of worship (wine). Milk, sugar and honey are the three sweets. They should be deemed to be the image of wine, and as such offered to the Deity. Those born in Kali Age are by their nature weak in intellect, and their minds are distracted by lust. By reason of this, they do not recognise the Shakti to be the image of the Deity. Therefore, O Parvati, for such as these let there be, in place of the last element of worship (sexual union), meditation upon the Lotus-feet of the Devi and the inward recitation of their *Ishta Mantra.* (VIII. 171-174)

Important instructions on the subject of Guru, Japa, Mantra,[23] Pranapratishtha, Puja, Samhara Mudra, significance of the Panchatattvas[24] are laid down in minute detail.

The *Mahanirvana Tantra* then proceeds to expound the *āchāra* or Dharma to be followed by the individual in different stages and different walks of life. From the moment of his birth to that of his death every event of his life is invested with a significance and treated from the religious and spiritual standpoint. The entire life of the community, social, economic, religious and even political, — castes and ashramas, women, laws of inheritance, adoption, kingship and commerce, ascetics and avadhutas, disabled members of society, Temples and Yagas, etc., etc. — all these aspects come to be touched upon from the angle of the ethical and spiritual development of the individual in harmony with the progress of the community of which he is a member and the instruction is generally in line with the famous Smritis of Manu and other authorities.[25]

As we approach the end of the last chapter the tone of the teaching changes. There is a notable shift of emphasis from ceremonial worship and religious rites to an inner Self-Knowledge, to the necessity of an inner discipline to gain the freedom of the soul. In memorable lines the Tantra declares :

> Liberation does not come from Japa, Homa or a hundred fasts ; man becomes liberated by the knowledge that he himself is Brahman.
>
> Final liberation is attained by the knowledge that the Atma is the Witness, is the Truth, is omnipresent, is one, free from eluding distractions of self and no-self, the supreme, and, though abiding in the body, is not in the body.

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[22] Speaking of purification it is emphasised that whatever purifies the *mind* that is to be done, *manah putam bhaved yena... tad ācharet* (VIII. 74).

[23] An important verse may be quoted here : The worshipper should then meditate upon his Guru as being in his head, the Devi in his heart, the Mula Mantra in the form of Tejas on his tongue, and *himself as identified with the glory of all three.* (VI. 168).

[24] *Vide* : Know that the first element is fire, the second is air, the third is water, the fourth is the earth and... as to the fifth element, know it to be ether, the support of the Universe. (VII. 110).

[25] Generally, not in every detail. For instance the *Mahanirvana* speaks of a fifth caste (beyond the usual four)—the *Sāmānya* born of the mixture of others. It also says that there are only two *ashramas* in the Kali Age, that of Grihastha and Bhikshuka, householder and mendicant ; 'there is in the Kali Age no Brahmacharya nor Vanaprastha'. (VIII. 8).

Also interesting for the student of the social conditions of the older society are the following imperatives :

'The human body is the receptacle of piety, wealth, desires and final liberation. It should therefore never be the subject of purchase ; and such a purchase is by reason of My commands invalid.' (VIII. 140).

'A wife should not be burnt with her dead husband. Every woman is Thy image—Thou residest concealed in the forms of all women in this world.' (X. 79-80).

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Brahma-sad-bhava is the highest; Dhyana-bhava is middling; Stuti and Japa is the last; and external worship is the lowest of all.

Yoga is the unity of the embodied spirit and the Supreme Spirit; Puja is the union of the worshipper and the worshipped; but he who realises that all things are Brahman for him there is neither Yoga nor Puja.

For him who possesses the knowledge of Brahman, the supreme Knowledge, of what use are Japa, Yajna, Tapas, Niyama, and Vrata?

He who sees the Brahman, who is Truth, Knowledge, Bliss, and the One, is by his very nature one with the Brahman. Of what use to him are Puja..

For him who knows that all is Brahman there is none to meditate upon, nor one who meditates.

He abides in this Universe, the creation of His power of Maya, which is incomprehensible even to the Devas. He is seemingly in the Universe, but not in it....

Self-knowledge, O Devi, is the one means of attaining final Liberation; and he who possesses it, is verily, — yea, verily — liberated in this world, even whilst living. (XIV. 115-135)

NARAYANIYAM

K. KUNJUNNI RAJA

The *Narāyanīyam* is one of the greatest and most popular devotional poems of Kerala. It is a brilliant summary in chaste and fluent Sanskrit of the leading incidents narrated in *Srimad Bhagavatam,* and gives in a nut-shell the sublime and lofty ideas contained in that Purana in a lucid and powerful manner. The poem contains 1,036 verses divided into one hundred sections called *dasakas* or decades of about ten verses each. More than half of it (sections 37-90) is devoted to the description of the popular and romantic story of Sri Krishna narrated in the tenth book of the *Bhagavatam*. Each verse is addressed to God Vishnu, the presiding deity of the temple at Guruvayur in central Kerala. Though in the form of a summary, the poem possesses all the distinctive features of a deliberate piece of art. The depth and clarity of the mystic vision, and the sincerity of ecstatic emotion pervading that great Purana are kept alive in full vigour in the Stotra also. In Kerala it occupies almost the same place as the *Bhagavatam,* and pious people recite portions of it daily with great faith and reverence, though outside the State it has not yet received the attention it richly deserves.

Its author Narayana Bhatta is one of the greatest scholar poets that Kerala has produced, and is the author of the monumental grammatical work *Prakriyāsarvasvam*, the first part of the Mimamsa work *Mānameyodayam* and several Campu works, besides the *Narayaniyam*. He was a Nambutiri Brahmin belonging to the family of Melpputtur near the Devi temple at Chandanakkavu, not far from Tirunavay on the banks of the Bharatappuzha, and flourished between A.D. 1560 and 1646. His father Matrdatta was a well known teacher with several students under him and took a keen interest in the education of Narayana.

According to the popular legends Narayana Bhatta was an irresponsible lad and was leading a lazy and licentious life in his youth. It is said that the famous astronomer Achyuta Pisharoti of Trikkantiyur, whose niece Narayana had married, once admonished him for his un-Brahmanical life, and that the repentant boy sincerely requested that scholar to be his teacher. The tradition is emphatic in maintaining that Narayana Bhatta had only one teacher, namely Achyuta Pisharoti. The story is that after studying the Kavyas and the Sastras, Narayana Bhatta was anxious to learn the Vedas also; but he did not want to have any other teacher. Pisharoti was a non-Brahmin and could not learn the Vedas. So Achyuta and Narayana Bhatta went to the Chola country in Tamilnad; there Narayana learned the entire Vedic literature from Achyuta Pisharoti who studied it from a Tamil Brahmin who was willing to co-operate with

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them. The story goes that as a result of learning the Vedas Achyuta Pisharoti became a prey to rheumatism. Narayana Bhatta felt that he was responsible for it, and prayed that the illness be transferred to his body. The teacher was cured of his illness and Narayana Bhatta became a victim to the same disease. To get rid of this Narayana Bhatta went to the Guruvayur temple, where he spent his time in prayer. The devotional epic was composed during this time; it was finished in one hundred days, and by that time he was completely cured of his illness.

This story making Narayana Bhatta an ideal and devoted student of his only teacher Achyuta Pisharoti is disproved by his own statement in the beginning of the *Prakriyasarvasvam* that he learned Mimamsa and other subjects from his father Matrdatta, the entire Vedic literature from Madhavacharya, Tarka from Damodara and Vyakarana from Achyuta. This also disproves the tradition that he began his education late in life. But the traditional account may still contain an element of truth. Narayana was no doubt a devoted student of Achyuta Pisharoti. It is also true that early in his life Narayana Bhatta had an attack of rheumatism, that he went to the Guruvayur temple and worshipped the deity there, and that his famous poem *Narayaniyam* was composed during that time. We find in that poem clear reference to his rheumatic complaints (in *Dasaka* 43). Every section in that poem ends with an ardent prayer to save him from his dire disease. Somehow he was cured of his illness, and naturally this was attributed to divine grace. Both Narayana Bhatta and the Deity of the temple became famous throughout the land as a result of this poem which effected the miraculous cure. Even at the present day, worship in this temple is considered to be a remedy for all diseases, especially rheumatism.

The *Narayaniyam* was completed on 27 November 1586, as is indicated by the chronogram 'āyurārogyasaukhyam' denoting 1712210, the number of Kali days elapsed till then, which is given at the end of the last verse of the poem. The name *Narayaniyam* is quite appropriate in more than one way: it is a poem composed by the poet Narayana, and it deals with the story of God Narayana. The last section is a detailed description of Sri Krishna from head to foot;[1] the tradition is that the poet had a vision of the deity of Guruvayur, and that it was this mystic vision that enabled him to write this section with such a devotional fervour and clear perception.

Of the three paths to the attainment of Ultimate bliss, Narayana Bhatta advocates the path of Devotion as superior to those of Action and Knowledge.[2] The land of Kerala was known for its acceptance of the path of Action, and it even got the name *Karmabhumi*. The famous Sankaracharya who hailed from Kerala was a great advocate of the path of Knowledge, and through his teachings this path had also become familiar in the land. But in course of time people became degenerate; the Brahmins performed sacrifices merely for their livelihood and being proud of their birth and education, they neglected the worship of God. Narayana Bhatta condemns such people and advocates devotion to Vishnu as the best way for Ultimate bliss, especially during the Kali age.

In more than one place the poet emphasizes his partiality towards Vishnu. In the 90th *dasaka* he points out Vishnu's superiority to the other gods like Siva, arguing on the basis of the stories of Vrika, Bhrigu, Mohini, Ambarisha and others. He points out that even during the Krishna-incarnation, Vishnu showed his superiority over Indra at Govardhanoddhā-

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[1] It begins:

अग्रे पश्यामि तेजोनिबिडतरकलायावलीलोभनीयं।
पीयूषाप्लावितोऽहं तदनु तदुदरे दिव्यकैशोरवेषम्।
ताक्ष्ण्यारम्भरम्यं परमसुखरसास्वादरोमाञ्चिताङ्गै-
रावीतं नारदाद्यैर्विलसदुपनिषत्सुन्दरीमण्डलैश्च॥

[2] निष्कामं नियतस्वधर्मचरणं यत्कर्मयोगाभिधं
तद्दूरेत्यफलं यदौपनिषदज्ञानोपलभ्यं पुनः।
तत्वव्यक्ततया सुदुर्गमतरं चित्तस्य तस्माद्विभो
त्वत्प्रेमात्मकभक्तिरेव सततं स्वादीयसी श्रेयसी॥

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rana, over Brahma during the stealing of the cows at Vrindavana, and over Siva in his fight with Bana. Narayana Bhatta says that even the great Advaita teacher Sankaracharya found consolation in writing commentaries on the *Vishnusahasranama* and the *Gita* and in composing hymns in praise of Vishnu. Ordinary human feelings like affection, hatred, fear and amorous attachment which tie one down to worldly bondage and misery, may help to bring about final release, if directed towards God; this truth has been indicated by the Pandavas, Sisupala, Kamsa and the Gopis respectively. The simple women of Vrindavana attained the state of Paramahamsa in an instant by meditating on him as a paramour.

Narayana Bhatta is a master in the art of summarizing long and complicated passages in a lucid and simple style. The whole of the Ramayana story is condensed in two decades; the Sankhya doctrines given in the fifth book of the *Bhagavatam* are summarized in one section; the doctrine of Bhakti explained to Uddhava in the 11th book of the *Bhagavatam* is clearly explained in three dasakas (91-93), and the entire *Gita* is beautifully put in one verse.[3] The summary never becomes monotonous or dry. Even while epitomizing long passages, the poet is able to use figures of speech, both of sound and of sense; and humorous remarks are strewn here and there. And the sincere prayer of an ardent devotee longing for a vision of his deity is seen everywhere.

Narayana Bhatta is equally at home in the graceful and the vigorous styles of composition, and is able to make the sound an echo of the sense. Moreover even in the selection of the metres he is very careful that they should be quite proper to the theme.[4] He has used a large number of metres, short as well as long, including many rare and musical ones.

The melody of metres, the sweet diction, the lucid exposition of sublime philosophical ideas, and above all the fervour of intense and sincere faith and devotion pervading throughout make the *Narayaniyam* one of the best devotional lyrics in Sanskrit literature.

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[3] जिष्णोस्त्वं कृष्ण सूतः खलु समरमुखे बन्धुघाते दयालुं
खिन्नं तं वीक्ष्य वीरं 'किमिदमयि सखे नित्य एकोऽयमात्मा।
को वध्यः कोऽत्र हन्ता तदिह वधभयं प्रौज्झ्य मय्यर्पितात्मा
धर्म्यं युद्धं चरे'ति प्रकृतिमनयथा दर्शयन् विश्वरूपम्॥

[4] केशापाशधृतपिञ्छकावितति सञ्चलन्मकरकुण्डलं
हारजालवनमालिकाललितमङ्गरागघनसौरभम्।
पीतचेलधृतकाञ्चिकाञ्चितमुदञ्चदंशुमणिनूपुरं
रासकेलिपरिभूषितं तव हि रूपमीश कलयामहे॥
(*Rasakrida* section)

अधिरुह्य ततः फणिराजफणान्
ननृते भवता मृदुपादरुचा।
कलाशिञ्जितनूपुरमञ्जुमिलत्-
करकङ्कणसंकुलसंक्वणितम्॥
(*Kaliyamardana* section)

Sri Krishna was bent on account of His ecstatic love. His body was bent in three places owing to His love for Radha. That is how some people explain Sri Krishna's form. Do you know why He has a deep-blue complexion? And why He is of such small stature — only three and a half cubits measured by His own hand? God looks so as long as He is seen from a distance. So the water of the ocean looks blue from afar. But if you go near the ocean and take the water in your hand, you will no longer find it blue; it will be very clear, transparent. So the sun appears small because it is very far away; if you go near it, you will no longer find it small. But that is a far-off vision: one does not see it except in samadhi.

—SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

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BHAGAVATA

P. NAGARAJA RAO

The Bhagavata is fried in the butter of jnana (knowledge) and steeped in the honey of love (bhakti) '—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

Once while Ramakrishna was listening to a reading of the Bhagavata, he saw a beam of light, 'like a cord' come forth from Krishna's feet and touch the sacred book. Then the beam touched Ramakrishna's heart and remained visible to him for some time, as a triangle connecting Krishna, the Bhagavata and himself. 'From this I learned,' Ramakrishna used to say, '*that Bhagavata, Bhakta and Bhagavan are one and the same*'.

Vedanta and the West. No. 146. Page 46-47 —*Christopher Isherwood.*

The Bhāgavata purāna is the most adored and widely read of the eighteen puranas of the celebrated sage Vyasa. Its popularity is only second to the Bhagavad Gita. The puranas have played a very significant role, along with the epics, in the dissemination of the philosophical and religious ideas of Hinduism to the vast multitude who have no scholarly equipment to read the difficult *Sastras.* The puranas with plenty of stories and descriptions, in easy style reinforce the Hindu way of life and its virtues. The spread of Hindu *Dharma* is most effectively carried by puranas through the medium of the concrete stories.

Among the puranas, the most philosophical and deeply moving is the Bhagavata. Its style is difficult and the construction of the verses baffles even the pandits. It has in it long prose passages also. It consists of 18,000 granthas divided into twelve books called *Skandhas.* The fascinating deeds and marvellous acts of Sri Krishna, the adored avatara of the Hindus, is the theme of the tenth book. Generations of the readers of the Bhagavata have found spiritual repose, infinite devotion, discerning detachment and above all a perfect spiritual satisfaction in reading this great book. It is described as the *lamp of wisdom* (adhyātma dipam). Its verses and words are direct, most powerful and uncompromising. It does not mince matters. The Bhagavata, in its task of imparting the three spiritual values, Jnana, Bhakti and Vairagya, uses all the methods of persuasion. At times Vyasa denounces men for their foolish ways, he frightens them, he advises them as a friend, and he also pities them. By innumerable methods of appeal he leads men into the acceptance of the spiritual values. It is 'unashamedly didactic'. The venerable sage Vyasa, after writing the great work Mahabharata, the encyclopedia of morals and religion, did not feel satisfied. He also classified the Vedas into different branches. All these good acts did not bring a sense of fulfilment for Vyasa. He was sitting quiet and the divine sage Narada accosted him. Vyasa asked Narada the cause for his dissatisfaction even after having written the giant works. Narada exhorted Vyasa 'to complete a purana that is exclusively devoted to the singing of the glory of Lord's exploits, manifestations and teachings to His devotees.' The book deals about this great theme. It celebrates the glory of the Bhagavan and His followers the Bhagavatas.

'Ah! ye men of the world who have taste and imagination, imbibe this delectable juice of the Bhagavata mixed with flowing nectar, the fruit which has through the parrot (Suka) dropped from the tree of the Vedas! Imbibe it till you become absorbed in the supreme being.'

The Bhagavata purana was taught by Vyasa to his son Suka, and Suka in his turn taught it to Parikshit. Once Parikshit went out for hunting and was thirsty, so he entered the hermitage of a sage and asked for water. The sage was absorbed in deep meditation and did not heed the words of the king. The king

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was annoyed with the sage, so he took out the dead snake on the floor and put it round the neck of the sage and repaired home. The sage's son saw the disrespect shown to his father, on his return home, and cursed the king to die of snake bite in seven days. Parikshit came to know this. He resolutely prepared to spend the seven days in devotion to the Lord. He erected a small island-like stage in the mighty Ganges and took refuge in the Lord. The great sage Suka came to the spot by chance and relieved the agony of the king by comforting him that seven days are enough for one to attain moksha, if one can listen to the Bhagavata. He then poured out the message of the great book he learnt from his father to the austere and dedicated prince.

The two figures of the Bhagavata are not merely fascinating like Krishna and Arjuna, but they are awe-inspiring in their unconquerable and superhuman detachment to the glamour and glitters of the world of samsara. It is said of Suka that he left home very early in life in quest of Brahman. 'The great Vyasa pained by the separation from his son, ran out calling him loudly by his name; the trees of the forest reverberated, yes, yes; we bow down to the sage, who is seated in the heart of all.' Sage Suka is the embodiment of spiritual perfection. He was free from the lust of flesh and was full of spiritual glory. He is often described as 'Suka Brahma'. He did not adorn or cover his body with any trappings. He moved about the world imparting spiritual wisdom to all. He would halt in no place for a long time. It was the good luck of Parikshit to get such a guru.

Parikshit himself is not an ordinary prince. He was the last perpetuator of the Pandava clan. When he was in Uttara's (i.e. Abhimanyu's wife's) person the terrific arrow of Aswatthama assailed him. Uttara ran for rescue to Krishna asking him to protect the baby in her, and was not mindful of her own life. The Lord with his Chakra protected the child in the womb. The child was seeking to know this universal protector from that time onwards. This is the reason for Parikshit being called Vishnu-rāt, the one protected by Vishnu. The term Parikshit also means one who discerns and examines things. There is not a greater occasion, a nobler teacher, a more devoted disciple, that combine to give us the Bhagavata.

The theme of the Bhagavata is the exclusive, and splendid treatment of man's need for God-love and the ways to attain it. In one verse, the author of the purana proclaims :

> 'The scriptures after a good deal of adequate examination find, that man's chief good lies in two things : (1) complete detachment to things, other than the spirit and (2) steady absorption in the bliss of the indeterminate Brahman.'

In the language of the Bible, it is Christ's exhortation :

> 'Seek ye the Kingdom of God and all other things will be added unto you.'

The Bhagavata laments that we men, seek all other things, wealth, fame, name, women, glory, etc. and forget the Kingdom of God. Men in their quest for false happiness spare no efforts. When glory of riches and lust of the flesh and fame rise before them, long suffering, endurance and opposing dangers men count as nothing. Fenelon observes :

> 'There is nothing that men do not prefer to God, a tiresome detail of business, an occupation utterly pernicious to health, the employment of time in ways one does not dare to mention — anything rather than God.'

To the passion-blind men who are enmeshed in their world of sense-delights, the Bhagavata makes a stirring appeal.

> 'Who on earth, other than the animal will be indifferent to the splendid exploits of the Lord, the delight of audience cherished by those who have turned their souls away from the perishing sense-objects' 'who again, in this world of ours, that has the knowledge of the essence of the aspirations of men (*purushārtha sāravit*) will cease to listen to the glory of the Lord after having feasted his ear once on it, unless he is a non-human species.'

The Bhagavata describes the effect of listening to the Lord's Glory.

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'He who hears, remembers constantly, meditates the auspicious manifestations of the Lord, and immerses his mind in the lotus like feet of the Lord (caranāra vindayor āvistacitta) are saved from samsara i.e. the cycle of births and deaths.'

Further, 'He who has once at least immersed his mind in the Lotus like feet of the Lord and is absorbed in His divine characteristics, shorn of all sins, never sees in his dream even the servants of the Lord of death with their ropes.'

Describing the greatness of the Bhagavata Vyasa writes :

'The Bhagavata purana composed by the great sage Vyasa, imparts the knowledge of *dharma* which has no worldly purpose and interest, which is read by men who have no egoism. It is auspicious. It is the Eternal Reality that destroys our threefold suffering (*tapatrayonmulam*).'

The love of the Lord otherwise called *Bhakti* alone can help us to withstand the temptations of life that assail us. Reflective wisdom (Viveka) enables us to sift the nature and merit of the goods of life. Unregenerate and sense-bound life makes us run after the simple, charming goods of life. The author of the Bhagavata singles out women (Vanita) and wealth (Vittam) as two great all-absorbing distractions of life !

'The desires of the senses draw us hither and thither, but when the hour is past, what do they bring us, but remorse of conscience and dissipation of the spirit.'

Men have become extremely sensitive to sex. They go quite mad in its pursuit. Sex has become a fire in the blood and burns up the whole personality of man. Society and new psychology have boosted it up and advertised it a thousand fold. The fashionable doctrine that the repression of sex is bad for mental health is given wide publicity. Men have very easily put aside their duties, ideals and betrayed their loyalties to get the women they love. The French sculptor Rodin has presented the picture of man's longing for women in a statue called the Eternal Idol.

* * *

The author of the Bhagavata finds in God-love the solution for all our troubles. For us to acquire detachment, the certain method is God. The intenser we love God the farther away we go from sensual attachment. Mere withdrawal is impossible for man. The best aid for the inculcation of Bhakti in us is the company of saints or devotees (*Bhagavatas*). Their company does wonders, it transforms our unregenerate nature and orients our desires towards God. It keeps us away from the different attritions of our age. The Bhagavatas are the salt of the earth. They keep us disinfected. They are the channels of a little light dropped into this dim world of ours. A world devoid of Bhagavatas is a totally blind world. The Bhagavata purana in many places sings the glory of the Bhagavatas and describes their company as one of the greatest *sadhanas* for God-realisation.

Sri Sankara has summarised this issue in a celebrated verse in his *Vivekachudamani* (3) :

'There are three things which are rare indeed and are due to the grace of God — namely, human birth, longing for liberation, and the protecting company of great souls.'

The company of the Bhagavatas, cleanses our soul of its passions, lust and all kinds of defilement. Joining in their activities, listening to them quells our little desires and steadies our inconstant mind, so as to reflect the wisdom of the Lord from above.

The devotee in the Bhagavata prays :

'Lord may our speech be engaged in recounting your qualities, our ears in hearing your exploits, our hands in doing service to you, our minds in the remembrance of your feet, our head in bowing to this world which is your dwelling place and our eyes in gazing at the saints who are your living images on earth.'

'The devotees fix their thoughts on the Lord and dedicate their lives to Him, enlightening each other, ever conversing about Him, they live contented and rejoicing in Him.'

We have a very clear and detailed account of the various characteristics of a devotee. They are called the Bhagavata dharmas. The

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way to overcome and resist temptation is easily achieved by the act of replacement. The *anurakti,* i.e. love of God engenders *Virakti* to the trifles of the World. We must fill ourselves with God-love and leave room for nothing else. An empty mind is the devil's work-shop.

The religious philosophy of the Bhagavata leaves enough room for a warm personalistic theism as also for the philosophy of absolutism. A careful study of the Sastras, decidedly points to two things as ensuring the good of mankind. (1) Dispassion for things other than the atman, and (2) complete absorption in the nirguna Brahman.' The Bhagavata, after proclaiming the supreme truth immediately adds in a spirit of deep humanity and perfect psychological insight into the diversity of human temperaments.

> 'Men of wisdom describe the non-dual consciousness that is Jnana (variously) as Brahman, Paramatman and Bhagavan.'

The Bhagavata purana is the treasure house of devotion. Bhakti is devotion to the Lord, arising from an intense love, for Him. It is not the result of fear of His power. It is the attraction of His love and infinite goodness. It marks a complete irrevocable faith in Him and gives the devotee a feeling of security. It is a human emotion that is very natural to all. To love and be loved are essential for life. Bhakti enables the devotee to face all trials, tribulations, and temptations of life. He is not haunted by the feeling of loneliness in his encounters with difficulties and dangers.

Bhakti as a mode of God-realisation is open to all. It is not the privileged method of a coterie. It is the broad road and the high way to God. Narada declares 'that among the devotees there is not the distinction of caste, learning, beauty, pedigree, wealth, profession, etc.' The love of the Lord is man's effort to fly from loneliness. The human heart naturally loves. In its encounter with human beings it feels that love is not fulfilled, that love is hurt and pained. The failures arise because man loves the perishable and the imperfect. It is but natural that the perishable and the imperfect should not satisfy man. It is at this juncture that man directs his intense longing to God the Perfect Love.

Bhakti takes on many forms. It depends on the nature of the want and the kind of man the Bhakta is. To begin with it is the love of the resplendent form of the Lord. Bhakti in large cases is directed to a supra-personal God who is the abode of infinite auspicious attributes. Two of the qualities of the Lord constitute the prime attraction of the devotee, His accessibility (saulabhya) and His infinite love or compassion (sausilya).

God is approached on the pattern of human relations by the Bhakta. Though God is being loved as mother, father, spouse, friend and Master, it is of a greater intensity directed to God. Further, God is conceived to be perfect and hence no possible human lapse by way of response to our love happens. The Bhagavata outlines nine forms of devotion to a supra personalistic God. The great boy devotee, Prahlada describes nine forms of devotion. He declared that the best lesson, worthy to be learnt is to learn to practise devotion to the Lord marked by nine characteristics. (1) Sravanam, listening, (2) Kirtanam, singing of the Lord, (3) Smaranam, constant remembrance of the Lord, (4) Padasevanam, worshipping Lord's feet, (5) Arcanam, saluting Him, (6) Vandanam, reverencing Him, (7) Dasyam, service to Him, (8) Sakhyam, moving with Him as a friend, (9) Atma-nivedanam, offering oneself to Him.

The first fundamental form of devotion is to listen to the accounts of the Lord's attributes, glory and His exploits from the lips of a Guru. Going to the Guru is not a mere convention. The tradition of the religious minded always upholds the importance and the function of the Guru. There is nothing to replace the living voice. Self-study of the scripture is not called Sravana. Constant listening to the glory of the Lord, makes the devotee sing with full throated ease God's glories and His goodness. The devotee feels

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with every limb the love of the Lord. He employs all his physical organs in the service of the Lord. The great devotee Ambarisha dedicates his entire self to the Lord.

> 'He lays down his mind at the lotus like feet of the Lord, he puts his power of speech to the description of Lord's qualities, and His abode *Vaikuntha*. With his hands he washes and cleanses the abode of the Lord. He glues his ears to the listening of the glory and the gospel of the Lord. He employs his eyes in seeing the characteristic marks of the Lord, he embraces the forms of the devotees, he smells the sweet odour of the flowers offered to the Lord, he tastes the *tulasi* offered to the Lord. He moves about on his feet to the holy places of pilgrimage. He bows his head down at the feet of the Lord. His only desire is the service of the Lord, not the desire of anything else. He lives ever immersed in relishing the great qualities of God.'

The devotee after listening to the glory of the Lord is deeply touched and moved by it. He lives with the God-idea. He eats, sleeps and drinks the God-idea. He at this stage, sings loudly and, at times in groups, the glory of the Lord. This is popularly known as Kirtana. He remembers the Lord at all the times. He feels the pangs of separation from the Lord. He gets momentary glimpses of the Lord. He is excited at the sight of the Lord. The author of the Bhagavata describes this stage of the Bhakti vividly.

> 'These devotees who are completely other worldly (lokabāhya) deeply moved by the love awakened as the result of listening to the glory of the beloved Lord, laugh loudly, sob, weep and sing loudly the glory of the Lord as mad men. Some weep anxiously for the sight of the Lord, some laugh, remembering the marvellous exploits of the Lord, some recount with zest the glory of the Lord, even when no one asks them, some dance with delight, some sing loudly, some imitate the actions of the Lord, some keep silent fixing their mind in the Lord.'

The devotees live the life of complete devotion employing every one of their faculties to the service of the Lord and His devotees. The nine types of devotion bring out the characteristic of Bhakti in all its phases. The Love of the Lord is a complete total surrender to Him without any reserve. The ninth type of Bhakti, i.e. *atma nivedana* is the end. Bhakti must be a natural attraction of the soul to the Lord. It is not induced by the fear of the Lord, not for the considerations of His gifts. It is love asking the Lord not to 'give me' something but 'make me' yours. Bhakti is man's supreme privilege. To go without it is to rob ourselves of the greatest thing in life. Bhakti is the difficult art of the 'practice of the presence of God'. The devotee does not yield to disbelief and discouragement and does not swerve from his object of love.

The Bhagavata purana highlights the effects of *Vairagya,* dispassion and Bhakti in all their aspects. The detachment preached by the purana is not negative. It is positive in its nature. To the bhakta, Vairagya to other things comes naturally with the increase in his devotion. Bhakti is not a type of a morbid attachment to God, as the blind lust one has for a woman. It is not the result of *moha.* It is the result of jnana which is nirmala, clear and immediate. Jnana leads to Bhakti, and Bhakti as it ripens makes us drop all the fetters of Samsara.

The story of Jadabharata illustrates the acme of Vairagya. The story of Kuchela, the acts of the Gopis of Brindavan, the love of Akrura and others illustrate the purity of God-love. The tenth skandha is the most popular part of the text. It covers a very large portion of the purana. Bhagavata is full of sincere, philosophical and memorable prayers to the Lord, e.g. of Bhishma, Dhruva, Kunti, Prahlada, Gajendra, etc. In short the Bhagavata is the treasure house of the three sadhanas of God-realisation, *Jnana, Bhakti* and *Vairagya.* The author of the Bhagavata draws us Godward by 'his rapier like thrusts at the profane sensualist who is not only unmindful of God but also of social morality.' Vyasa's biting irony does not spare the purse-proud, power-mad, passion-blind sensualists. He exposes in glaring manner the life of such men. He stings like a scorpion. When he talks of God-love he drops honey and describes best 'the passionless peace with which the ātman confronts the world after his vision.'

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SOME REFERENCES

1. We get an excellent summary of the purana in Dr V. Raghavan's *The Indian Heritage*, pages 354 to 403 (First edition) 1956.
2. A free translation in English of the entire purana is issued by Gita Press, Gorakhpur in 5 volumes.
3. A certain saint called Jayatirtha who lived some 90 years ago has composed a valuable *anthology* of the Bhagavata slokas, under some 30 topics. It is called *The Bhagavata Sarodhara.*
4. In a foreword to the select poems from the Bhagavata issued by G. A. Natesan in 1936, Sir P. S. Sivaswami Iyer has summarised the message of the purana neatly.
5. In 1947, Sri N. Raghunathan, wrote an article on the 'Art of Srimad Bhagavata' in the journal of the Oriental Research Jnstitute, Madras, 1947 March, vol. XVI, Part III, pages 129-140.

SREE - KRISHNA - KARNAAMRITA

SWAMI ADIDEVANANDA

Sreekrishna-karnaamrita of Leelaasuka may truly be regarded as a fine product of Sanskrit poetry. The charms of music and dance pervade this lyrical poem from the beginning to the end. The poem reaches the highest pitch of elegance attained in this type of poetry. The alliteration does not produce artificial strain. The emotions delineated are as spontaneous as they are deep. In the melody of its diction, in the loftiness of pure love and in the expression of subtle and varied sentiments the *Karnaamrita* occupies the highest place in the lyrical literature.

It is no wonder that this poem suffused with the Krishna idyll is to this day very popular in this country, specially in the South, among all sections of the people. Sreekrishna-caitanya popularized this in Bengal as a work of devotion. It is one of those rare works which has fired the imagination of later poets and promoted the Krishna cult. It has captured and entranced the hearts of millions. There is hardly a concert in which a musical rendering of a verse or two from the *Karnaamrita* is not done.

It is unfortunate that we know very little of the life and age of Leelaasuka. There are indeed stories of his sensuality, until the timely reproach of a kindly courtezan named Cintaamani brought him to his senses.[1] Bilvamangala, popularly known as Leelaasuka, was in all probability a native of Kerala. The prevalent tradition makes Leelaasuka a predecessor of Jayadeva, the author of the lyrical masterpiece, *Geetagovinda*; and on the strength of this tradition he may be assigned to the 11th century A.D.

The theme of this mystic poem is found in the tenth section of the *Bhaagavata* where Sreesuka relates the glory and greatness of Krishna. Our poet has great admiration for Suka of the *Bhaagavata,* and calls himself Leelaasuka to indicate his spiritual affinity with the mystic poet. Like Suka he describes the enrapturing beauty of the Divine Child in the guise of a cowherd, the wonderful deeds of his childhood and the amorous sports with the cowherdesses of the Vrindaavana.

The poet indicates here and there his Brahmanical inheritance and culture. His preceptor was one Somagiri. Two verses in the poem hint that he was a Saiva by birth, but became a lover of Krishna, who pervaded his mind and heart with no place for any other thought :

> We are Saivas; indeed there is nothing to discuss about that. We are devoted to the utterance of the Pancaaksharee Mantra. Yet my mind thinks only of the lovely child of the cowherdess, dark-hued like the atasee flower, face full of smiles.[2]

[1] चिन्तामणिर्जयति ।

[2] शैवा वयं न खलु तत्र विचारणीयं
पञ्चाक्षरीजपपरा नितरां तथापि ।
चेतो मदीयमतसीकुसुमावभासं
स्मेराननं स्मरति गोपवधूकिशोरम् ॥ २. २४.

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And further :

> This song called *Krishna-karnaamrita* was composed by Leelaasuka whose sole jewel consists of Siva's feet, who, like a parrot descends on the nosegay of the eternal glory of Daamodara ; may this flow for endless cycles of time.[3]

Like many a poet of the day our author also seems to have enjoyed some form of court-patronage, earning his livelihood by praising his masters. But unlike others he found this insincere work of praise galling. He thought that his occupation was an insult to Sarasvatee, the Goddess of learning. Says he :

> O Mother, for earning my bread, I who have no shame made you dance before unworthy people ; nothing can be more improper than this. Forgive me for this, you who are naturally affectionate towards your children. I shall expiate my sins by praising the glory of Vishnu in the guise of a cowherd.[4]

Karnaamrita is undoubtedly a work of sudden inspiration. The ecstatic rhapsodies of the poet flow like a mighty river which has burst its banks. There is no effort, strain or artificial expression anywhere. The author again and again sees the vision of Krishna in a vivid manner and expresses the varied moods as they come to him without sequence. He speaks like one who has the true experience of the Divine. Poetry is only the means to express the outpourings of his heart. Even a casual reader of the poem can hardly escape the feeling that most of the verses are meant to imprint on our minds the chiselled image of Krishna ; nay, one becomes obsessed with the image of Krishna before the poem is completely read. Repeated expressions like 'May the lotus-face abide in my mind', 'May It shine in my mind', 'May he take possession of our hearts' indicate that each verse of the poem is meant to stimulate meditation and divine communion.

The Absolute is beyond the ken of speech and mind. Yet it becomes knowable, finite, as it were, in our eyes so that we may have a glimpse of the Divine even in our unregenerate state. The Supreme Lord stands placing the bliss of nirvaana within the reach of the Divine (I. 2). The Divine is to be sought in only three places : The bosom of the blessed Gopees, the minds of the sages, the foot of a tree in Vrindaavana (I. 22). There is no need to wander. The Brahman that is realizable in the Vedaanta is discernible in the trees and cows of Vrindaavana, in the music of the flute also (II. 21). That indescribable Child which abides in the Vedas, in the heart of the yogins, becomes accessible in the company of the Gopees (II. 18). There is no need to search for Him in the wild forests of the Vedas. The poet exhorts the vain seekers thus : 'Search in the houses of the Gopees the supreme Object of the Upanishads tied to some mortar!' (II. 28). 'Let the ancient seers' says the poet, 'meditate upon the Supreme Person hidden in the cave of the heart ; we shall disport ourselves in the ocean of the nectar of the stories of Yasoda's child' (II. 54). This is the conclusion of our poet who is steeped in the Bhaagavata-lore. Path of love is natural and spontaneous. The lover of God finds supreme happiness in describing or hearing the glorious deeds of the Lord.

Leelaasuka, though an orthodox Brahman, does not put work, even of the obligatory type, before God. First God, then karma or jnaana. He is unable to perform any of the duties incumbent on a person of his position, as his mind is irresistibly drawn towards Krishna. Says he :

> O Sandhyaavandana, may good befall you ! O Bath, I salute you ! O gods and *manes*, I am unable to satisfy you with oblations, forgive me. Sitting in some corner I wish to spend my time in contemplation of Krishna and thereby to des-

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[3] ईशानदेवचरणाभरणेन नीवी-
दामोदरस्थिरयशःस्तबकोद्गमेन ।
लीलाशुकेन रचितं तव देव कृष्ण-
कर्णामृतं वहतु कल्पशतान्तरेऽपि ॥ १. ११०.

[4] मातर्नतःपरमनुचितं यत्खलानां पुरस्तात्
अस्ताशङ्कं जठरपिठरीपूर्तये नर्तितासि ।
तत्क्षन्तव्यं सहजसरले वत्सले वाणि कुर्या
प्रायश्चित्तं गुणगणनया गोपवेषस्य विष्णोः ॥ २.४.

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troy all my sins. I think this is quite enough. What else do I care for ?[5]

Each time the poet paints a new portrait of Krishna : As a baby he crawls on all his fours in the lanes of the Gokula (III. 93). As a boy he moves about in the streets of Vraja marking his well-known foot-prints wherever he goes (I. 16). Everything is sweet about him : Sweet is his form, sweet is his face, sweet are his bewitching smiles (I. 91). The child's body is besmeared with butter, milk and curds (II. 1). His blue-hued body confuses the cows, peacocks and the milk-maids of the Vraja alike, each mistaking it for the blue Yamunaa, blue clouds and the blue shoots of the tamaala tree respectively (II. 2). The Supreme in its infinite compassion condescends to become Arjuna's charioteer, washing even horses ; he bears the whip in his turban, holding the reins between the teeth (II. 48). Affectionate Yasoda coaxes the child to drink the milk, as that would cause his tuft to grow ; Krishna, while sipping the milk, pauses to find out if his tuft is grown (II. 60). Once while playing he swallows mud to his heart's content and bewilders his mother who saw the whole universe in his tiny mouth instead of mud (II. 64). Eventide ; the flowers are blossoming ; the moonlight has flooded the forests. The pretty Krishna stands surrounded by the cowherdesses, their hearts filled with unalloyed love (III. 39).

Those fortunate people whose minds were coloured with Krishna consciousness could not see, hear or think anything but Krishna. The same thing happened to Krishna himself. Once a maid went forth to sell milk and curds ; as her heart was firmly set on Krishna she forgot herself and cried, 'Govinda, Daamodara, Maadhava, buy' (II. 55). Absent-minded Raadhaa constantly thinking Krishna churned in an empty vessel without cream or curds. Similarly Krishna also who had given all his thoughts to Raadhaa tied a bull to the tether with a view to milk (II. 25). Once Krishna meeting Candraavalee on the way asked, 'Raadhaa, are you well ?' Candraavalee replied, 'Kamsa, are you well ?' 'You simple girl, when did you see Kamsa ?' asked Krishna. 'Pray, when did you see Raadhaa ?' retorted Candraavalee (III. 106).

There are some fine verses containing dialogues. This is a well-known form in Sanskrit poetry. Here are some examples :

'Mother.'
'What, my dear Krishna ?'
'Give me the cup.'
'What for ?'
'For drinking the milk.'
'Now it is not available.'
'When will it be available ?'
'At night.'
'What is night ?'
'The beginning of darkness.'
Then Krishna closing his eyes said, 'Mother, the night has come, give me milk' (II. 59).[6]

This verse suggests also that the universe is plunged in darkness when the Lord closes his eyes. A milk-maid was surprised to see Krishna in her house and questioned :

'Who are you, boy ?'
'Brother of Balaraama.'
'Why are you here ?'
'I mistook this for my house.'
'That is all-right ; but why have you put your hand in the butter-pot ?'

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[5] सन्ध्यावन्दन भद्रमस्तु भवते भोः स्नान तुभ्यं नमो
भो देवाः पितरश्च तर्पणविधौ नाहं क्षमः क्षम्यताम्।
यत्र क्वापि निषद्य यादवकुलोत्तंसस्य कंसद्विषः
स्मारं स्मारमघं हरामि तदलं मन्ये किमन्येन मे ॥
२. १०६.

[6] मातः ! किं यदुनाथ ? देहि चषकं, किं तेन ?
पातुं पयः
तन्नास्त्यद्य, कदास्ति वा ? निशि, निशा का वा ?
अन्धकारोदयः ।
आमील्याक्षियुगं निशाप्युपगता देहीति मातुर्मुहुः
वक्षोजांशुककर्षणोद्यतकरः कृष्ण स्म पुष्णातु नः ॥
२. ५९.

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'O Mother, I'm just searching a lost calf; don't you feel grieved even for a moment, I shall go away.'[7]

Once Krishna's mother was telling him the story of Raama to lull him to sleep. But he forgot his present incarnation and revealed himself as Raama :

'There lived a person called Raama.'
'Hum.'
'His wife was Seetaa.'
'Hum.'
'As desired by his father he and his wife were wandering in the Pancavatee region when Raavana carried Seetaa away.'
Hearing the abduction of Seetaa, he shouted excitedly, 'Lakshmana, where is my bow, my bow, my bow?'[8]

The poet presents some exquisite portraits of mystic significance. A cowherdess had caught Krishna in the very act of stealing butter. She bolted the door and went to Yasoda to prove his guilt. Lo! she saw Krishna already there tied to a mortar (II. 51). Her tongue clove to the roof of her mouth. In what a strange manner Krishna reveals his all-pervasiveness. Spiritual life is not an easy one. It demands complete sacrifice and dedication. Half-hearted people should not look in that direction. As the Upanishad says, it is as sharp as the razor's edge. Thus warns the poet :

O travellers, go not in the path of the Bheemarathee river; for there stands a certain naked robber, blue-hued like tamaala, placing his hands on his loins; yet he robs away the mind-wealth.[9]

Blue colour suggests infinity. Placing the hands on the loins indicates that he has no action whatsoever to perform. Inactive as he is, he steals the minds of devotees mysteriously.

Krishna is love-incarnate. To the cowherdesses he was their beloved lover. When he played on his flute the girls forgot everything and ran to him. Our poet says that the maids hearing the music of his reed immediately felt liberated (II. 95). This reminds us of what Suka has said in the tenth section of the *Bhaagavata*. It is described there how some Gopees shut up in their apartments got their mundane bondage sundered as they concentrated their minds on Krishna.

The music of Krishna's flute had devastating effect even on the non-conscient objects. As the *Bhaagavata* says that the rivers ceased to flow, the wild creepers and trees bore blossoms and fruits, and birds drawn away by the intoxicating music attended on Krishna, shutting their eyes like the yogins. Says the poet :

Maddening all the worlds, causing the Srutis to echo, gladdening the trees, making the mountains melt, enchanting the deer, enrapturing the cows, confusing the cowherds, making the munis to close their eyes in contemplation, manifesting the seven fundamental notes and revealing the mystic significance of Om — triumphs the flute-sound of the Child.[10]

In the *Bhaagavata* it is related how Krishna sends Uddhava to Gokula with a message of love. Reaching Gokula Uddhava was en-

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[7] कस्त्वं बाल ? बलानुजः, किमिह ते ? मन्मन्दिरा
शङ्क्या,
युक्तं तन्नवनीतपात्रविवरे हस्तं किमर्थं न्यसेः ?
मातः कञ्चन वत्सकं मृगयितुं मागा विषादं क्षणात्
इत्येवं वरवल्लवीप्रतिवचः कृष्णस्य पुष्णातु नः ॥
२. ८१.

[8] रामो नाम बभूव हुं तदबला सीतेति हुं तौ पितु-
र्वाचा पञ्चवटीतटें विहरतस्तस्याहरद्रावणः ।
निद्रार्थं जननीकथामिति हरेर्हुङ्कारतः शृण्वतः
सौमित्रे क्व धनुर्धनुर्धनुरिति व्यग्रा गिरः पान्तु वः ॥
२. ७१.

[9] मायात पान्थाः पथि भीमरथ्या
दिगम्बरः कोऽपि तमालनीलः ।
विन्यस्तहस्तोऽपि नितम्बबिम्बे
धूर्तस्समाकर्षति चित्तवित्तम् ॥ २. ३४.

[10] लोकानुन्मदयन् श्रुतिर्मुखरयन् क्षोणीरुहान् हर्षयन्
शैलान्विद्रवयन् मृगान्विवशयन् गोबृन्दमानन्दयन् ।
गोपान् संभ्रमयन् मुनीन्मुकुलयन् सप्तस्वरान्
जृम्भयन्
ओङ्कारार्थमुदीरयन् विजयते वंशीनिनादशिशुः ॥
२. १०९.

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tranced to find the cowherd boys and girls singing songs of Krishna and recounting his super-human deeds, unconscious even of their bodies. Moved by their deep love to Krishna, Uddhava said : 'O how blessed I should be in Vrindaavana, as a creeper, herb or plant or bush that come in contact with the dust of the feet of these Gopees.'[11] In tune with the spirit of that great Scripture Leelaasuka also prays for a future birth on the bank of Yamunaa as a reed in order to enjoy the blissful state by coming in contact with Krishna's divine lips (II. 9).

The greatest and ultimate desire of a true Hindu is to wish for the vision of the Divine at the time of final departure from this body. All good works, prayers, pilgrimages, constant meditation have this goal only. So the poet prays for the ultimate vision :

> Standing cross-legged, bedecked with peacock-feather, with the face turned on one side, playing the flute — in this form may the most compassionate Divine Radiance appear before me at the time of my final departure.[12]

The climax is reached when the divine poet declares that he is already liberated from 'all bonds of the body'.[13] For one who was having a constant vision of Krishna, there is no need to wait till the end. He is liberated while living in the body itself.

What is the message of *Krishna-karnaamrita?* The poet has pressed into service all his talents in depicting the spiritual yearning by which the soul is united with the Divine ; there is very little of earthly passion or vulgar amours throughout the poem. Krishna is the perfect avatar in the guise of a cowherd boy. This notion repeatedly occurs even while apparently depicting the pleasures of the senses. Love lavished on empty objects is futile and unenduring. The sole object of love is Krishna, the ultimate source of love itself. The poet is successful in enthroning Krishna in his heart. No one can read this poem without a genuine experience of purest sentiments in his worldly heart. This is the recondite message of the *Karnaamrita* :

> Awake, awake, O my mind ! After a long time your object has been achieved. Here, here, in front of you stands the Perfect Bliss. Enjoy It.[14]

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[11] आसामहो चरणरेणुजुषामहं स्यां
वृन्दावने किमपि गुल्मलतौषधीनाम् ।
श्रीमद्भागवतम्-१०. ४७. ६१.

[12] व्यत्यस्तपादमवतंसितबर्हिबर्हं
साचीकृताननिवेशितवेणुरन्ध्रम् ।
तेजः परं परमकारुणिकं पुरस्तात्
प्राणप्रयाणसमये मम सन्निधत्ताम् ॥ २. २२.

[13] अहं विमुक्तोऽस्मि शरीरबन्धात् । २. ११०.

[14] जागृहि जागृहि चेतः
चिराय चरितार्थता भवतः
अनुभूयतामिदमिदं
पुरः स्थितं पूर्णनिर्वाणम् ॥ ३. ६४.

The characteristics of Bhakti are described variously on account of difference in viewpoints. Vyasa, the son of Parasara, is of opinion that Bhakti expresses itself in devotion to acts of worship and the like. The sage Garga thinks that it expresses itself in devotion to 'sacred talk' and the like. The sage Sandilya holds that it must be without prejudice to the delight in the Atman. But Narada is of opinion that the essential characteristics of Bhakti are the consecration of all activities, by complete surrender, to Him, and extreme anguish if He were to be forgotten. Examples do exist, of such perfect expression of Bhakti. Such indeed was the Bhakti of the Gopis of Vraja.

—*Narada Bhakti Sutras,* 15-21.

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GITA-GOVINDA

K. CHANDRASEKHARAN

Devotion to Godhead has played a very significant part in the creative literature of India. The best poetry too is invariably that which brings to mind the mystic element in subtle as well as vivid lines. If Valmiki's outpourings concretised his *Āntara Devatā* in the hero, Sri Ramachandra; if saint Tyāgarāja's kritis as a rule deified Rama as the Master and fountain-head of all life; Jayadeva wove all his devotional experiences into the bewitching love-song of Rādhā in intense longing for her lover, Sri Krishna. The heart of the devotee-composer entered in spirit through every bit of a long process of wooing of the lover and the moods alternating between anxiety and expectation, frustration and wounded pride, exultation and identification — all tending towards the only object, namely, the master-musician with his flute.

It is said that Jayadeva was an ornament at the court of Lakshmana Sena of Bengal towards 1100 A.D., shining brightest along with other stars like Dhôyee, Govardhana, Sridhara of lesser magnitude. But it is Jayadeva who combined devotional poetry and music with a rare symmetry and sweetness that down the centuries later, many a bard and songster of renown, felt it hard to equal him either in the bejewelled phraseology or the tuneful quality of their renderings. Further the imageries inlaid easily transport the *rasika* to a realm crowded with pictures of the love-sports of Krishna and his sweetheart, though hardly allowing the mysticism to be forgotten in the aroma of amorous poetry.

Valmiki, it is said, attuned his verses to stringed instruments and thereby created for the first time *sangīta* and *sāhitya* blending into an unforgettable aesthetic experience. But even then tradition has not been able to provide a clear conception of the exact musical structure of the composition; only the literary aspect of the *sahitya* has gained more and more with years into a surpassing *magnum opus* of epic grandeur in literature. Centuries later, Tyagaraja in the South, set to music many an episode from the Ramayana, though in his creations the musical art predominated so much as to even eclipse the literary merit in the songs. People in the grip of soul-filling music rarely pause to linger sufficiently on the purport — poetic very often — of his compositions. It is to Jayadeva for the first time was given the opportunity to align his sahitya adequately with his music of equal maturity of growth, and capture the hearts of connoisseurs everywhere by both his dulcet language and delightful tunes.

The Ashtapadīs, as the Gita-Govinda is also widely known, should have derived the description from the eight sets of couplets often of each entire song. Whichever was the origin of the description, it is immaterial in as much as tradition identifies only the Gita-Govinda with Ashtapadis, as soon as it is mentioned. No doubt there are other Ashtapadis like the Sivāshtapadi of one of the earlier heads of the Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetha. Anyhow Jayadeva deserves the gratitude of posterity for thus figuring as a poet of no mean order and a musician of enduring excellence in between the ages of classicism in poetry and of elaborate workmanship in *kriti* compositions of the famous trinity in Karnatic music, Tyagaraja, Muthuswami Dikshitar and Syama Sastri, who flourished in the later part of the eighteenth and the earlier part of the nineteenth centuries.

Now turning to the Gita-Govinda itself, it is made up of twelve cantos comprising twenty-four Ashtapadis with definite *rāgas* and *laya* patterns. There are other independent stanzas also thrown in between such songs which for their merit of versification and content do not fail to infuse as much enjoyment in the readers as the Ashtapadis themselves. Metrical variety and thought-content mark them out sometimes as of equal quality with some of the earlier

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poets of the classical age in Sanskrit literature. The real charm of the whole piece consists in the love-theme running through it. Radha, the winsome Gopi is pining for Krishna, meets him in a lonely arbour in the dark night, snatches a few moments of sweet union with him, parts from him only to be delayed in her next meeting with him, bears ill the pain of separation from him, sends her maid to her lover who returns to report of Krishna's infidelity to her and his amours with the other girls of Brindavan, falls into a mood of frustration and despair only to be finally united with him in bliss, after rejecting him in hurt pride of his faithlessness erstwhile — all betokening the ways of true love never running smooth. But, had the poetry and resonance of the verses stopped with merely conjuring up images of unsurpassed beauty to the reader or listener, it might have all ended as any other piece of mystical literature. But the music lifts easily the hearts of the listeners to an atmosphere where nothing of physical appeal ever can seek admission or acceptance. Only the swaying lilt of the lines deepens the spiritual hunger for more and more of the uncloying elixir, called Bhakti. Added to the music inherent in the words, should gestural language and bodily movements lend their graces to the superior meaning becoming more explicit, we cannot imagine of a greater felicity to fill the cup of aesthetical satisfaction. There is also, according to some, an express purpose of *nritya* aiding the Ashtapadis. However much the dance tradition pertaining to it might have got broken up owing to various circumstances, still some existing manuscripts show the exact technique for *abhinaya* of the Ashtapadis in particular. We are aware of a rich tradition, both in the North and the South, of the Radha-Krishna cult indulging in dances as part of a form of worship.

One is perhaps not also far incorrect to think that the Radha conception itself became more emphasised only after the advent of the Gita-Govinda. The Srimad Bhagavata does not at all speak of any particular Gopi by name of Radha as having ensnared Krishna. Maybe, later *purānas* have specified her existence. Still the form and felicity of her identity as an object of the Lord's own choice has not earlier than in Jayadeva achieved this clear outline. There is a counterpart to Radha in Nappinnai Pirātti of Āndal's Tiruppavai. Except in the concept of Jīva taking the shape of a damsel worthy of God in his finite form of Krishna, the stealer of hearts, nothing more need detain long anyone prying into the love. It is all the same old theme of the process by which the individual spirit passes through many tribulations, temporary respite, renewed perception, darkness of the soul and final beatitude through union with the Overall Soul.

The surprise is, if at all, how despite materialistic surroundings and the sordid everyday life, we have still a hankering after poetry of the kind represented by Jayadeva. Age after age in this land of infinite varieties of worship and spiritual attainments, poetry and religion have never stood apart but ever mingled in one eternal quest of life's mystery or meaning. It is to the standing credit of India's heritage that nowhere in her wonderful output of art and literature can be traced anything which will not ultimately lead one to the eternal Truth. If music, sculpture, painting, architecture and poetry, each unfolds the human personality to its utmost when interpretation and experience have adequately contributed their share to its discovery, it is a safe voyage for the soul to reach its haven. Hence the ideal preached only in this land of hoary traditions, that if art and poetry have no marks on their faces of spirituality then they are not of the highest authenticity. For, according to us, the soul cannot be blocked in its passage from the lower to the higher reaches of spirituality, however indifferent or uneducated it remains in its beginnings. Sometime or other it must come to the brink of the stream for slaking its thirst. Maybe the thirst is generated earlier or later according to one's prior acts and previous records. But one and all must come to where all knowledge, all experience, all strivings lead the human spirit.

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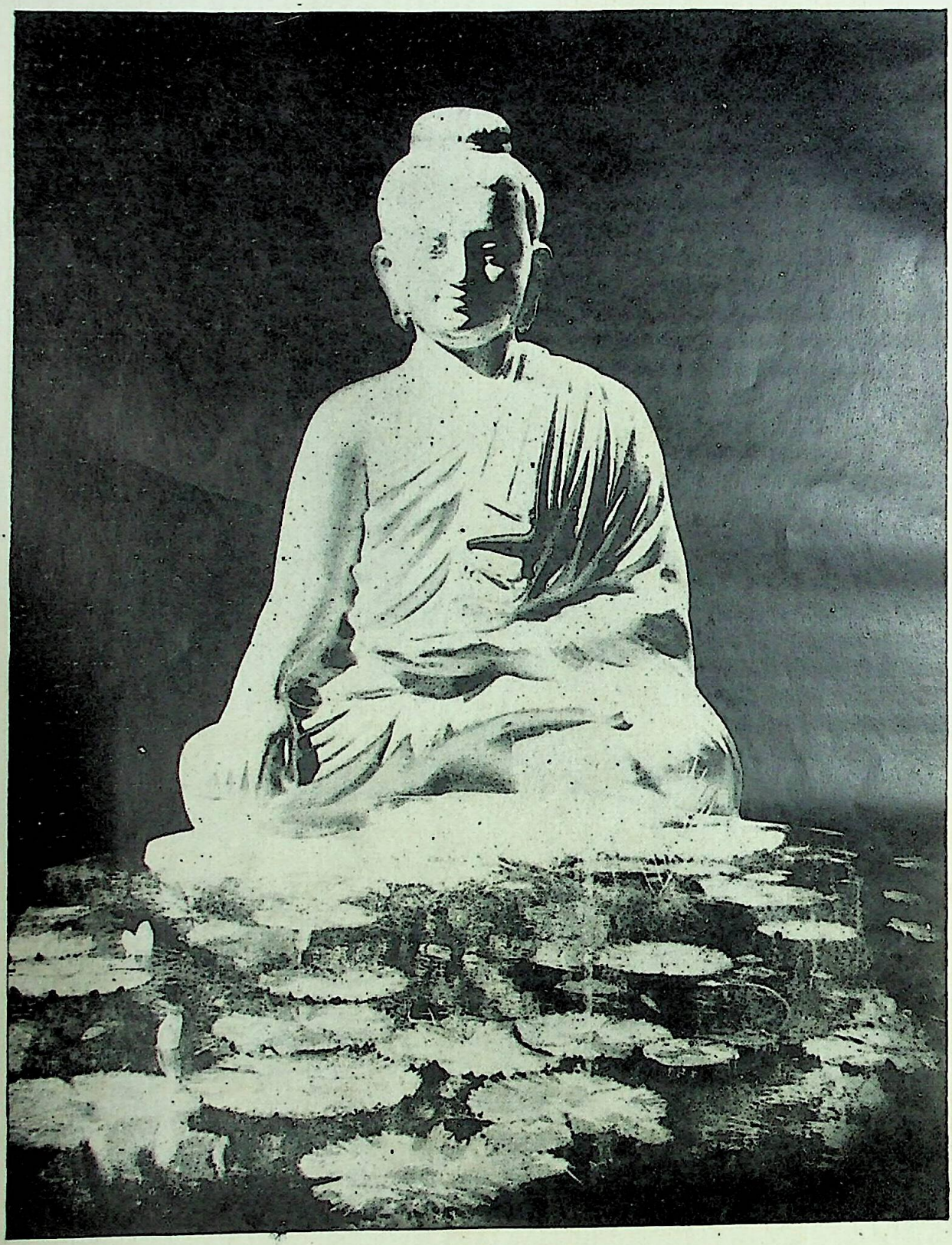
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Venugopala with consorts

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Buddha

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DHARMAPADA

(The ethics of Buddhism)

SRAMANERA JIVAKA

In Buddhist Scriptures one can find something of everything from the most abstruse metaphysical teaching that the world had ever heard to an elementary code of ethics which the simplest and most uneducated persons can understand and one that is applicable to monk as well as layman.

The Dharmapada is the name of this ethical system, and the work is found in varying degrees of quantity in Pali, Chinese and Tibetan, but the original Sanskrit version is lost. It is an early book although its accurate dating is uncertain, and it was known at the time of King Asoka. In the preface to the Chinese translation, called the Fa-khen-king, or the Sutra of Law Verses, the date of the translation is given as 223 A.D. The Tibetan version is the longest but contains only one quarter of the same verses as appear in the Pali canon.

Confining oneself to the Pali translation which is the best known and most easily accessible, it having been published now in most of the Indian languages as well as in English, one finds that the ethical system it contains consists of one main theme, that of selfconquest. The work is divided into chapters, each with a different title, yet this theme is maintained throughout the whole.

It is a frank account of what every Buddhist should practise in his or her everyday life and it pulls no punches. It offers nothing but hard work to those who aspire to the great Goal of Enlightenment. But it differs from other philosophical and more technical sutras which deal with the Path to Enlightenment in that it seems to recognise openly the fact that the average hearer or reader is unlikely to gain Enlightenment in this present life, while other writings are directed to those who renounce the world for the purpose of reaching the Goal and who have already reached a stage of spiritual development which may make this possible, through endless struggle with the self in former lives. The majority of persons, however, caught in the cycle of rebirths through lack of effort in the right direction, or awareness of the need for such effort, are those to whom the Dharmapada is speaking, those who live mechanically, like machines, the slaves of their desires and emotions.

But it is also a book which is profitable for adherents to other outward forms of religion, for the need for selfmastery — the Truth in ethical terms — knows no boundaries and is unrelated to tolerance and bigotry. For, whether Buddhists or not, the men of this Earth of ours are desperately in need of guidance, since science is tending to take the place of religion and science is unaware of the existence of the spiritual.

Let the Dharmapada speak for itself a while.

> 'He who is given to fault-finding in others, who is conscious of, and irritated by them, will multiply his own faults. Such a one is far from the eradication of his own faults.'

And yet which of us is not guilty of this? How quickly and eagerly we criticise others and how we hate to hear criticism of ourselves. But, if it comes our way, we begin by making excuses and finally turn on our benefactor and make a counter-attack. We do not listen quietly and go home and think about it and realise the truth of it or believe that others can see us so much better than we can see ourselves, and then return to thank him who has told us something that will help us in our striving for selfconquest.

Then we read :

> 'If a man makes himself as he teaches others to be, then he will be well subdued, for the self is very difficult to subdue.'

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Yes, we work hard to reform other people by every possible means, but work on ourselves — ? Oh, no ! Yet why should we expect others to reform and not ourselves ? Should we not practise what we preach ? But preaching is so much easier !

'Self is the Lord of Self. What higher Lord can there be ?'

Buddhism does not admit of a personal God, much less of a Saviour who removes from us the responsibility we have to overcome our own defects. But it does admit of an Absolute Which can only be appreciated when Enlightenment is gained, for the Absolute is beyond the range of the finite mind working in terms of subject and object and unable to get away from its own thinking. The Absolute is Perfect Truth, is Reality Itself and Enlightenment is the merging with this Reality, the seeing of the world entirely different with no ideas of 'I' and 'it' to distort it. Hence, if we gain selfmastery we are but a step from the Goal of Enlightenment and there is none higher above us at that stage, for Enlightenment is Buddhahood.

These verses are not consecutive in the book but are scattered in different chapters and so show a measure of the whole, for in between there is a wealth of further priceless verses all tending in the same direction. For besides giving good advice it also tells how progress can be achieved. The first step to selfmastery is through control of our thoughts, 'for thoughts are difficult to control, difficult to restrain'. How well we know this ! We keep worrying, brooding, hating, unable to sleep because of the thoughts which will keep running through our minds in endless repetition. And sometimes we find we have said something which we would give everything to have unsaid, were that possible. And the way to gain control, we are told, is to be wide awake all the time, not mechanical as we habitually are. 'Wakefulness is the way to immortality', for if we are always selfaware we shall not be caught off our guard, words will not slip out and we shall be master of our thoughts instead of their slaves.

Warning is also given to the monkhood in the Dharmapada, that the mere wearing of the yellow robes does not make a bhikshu, that many who have had the Higher Ordination are bhikshus in name alone, but many who have never been ordained are truly bhikshus even so, because they are bhikshus in spirit which is the main essential. Renunciation of the world must be a sincere act and from a true sense of values which assesses rightly the nothingness of worldly goods and pleasures, not, as is happening today so often, seeking within the sangha social security and freedom from the need of earning a living and the responsibilities of family life.

Selfmastery, the Path to Enlightenment, thought control and sincerity of purpose, all point in the same direction and they all aid in developing the faculty of Compassion, the perfection of which is reached with Enlightenment in as far as it itself is Perfect Wisdom and Perfect Compassion, like the coin with its two sides. It is lack of selfmastery, lack of thought control, lack of sincerity or knowledge of where we are going or what we are on earth for, which is leading men on to their destruction, which nourishes that which is at the root of all the suffering manufactured by man on man, wars, crime, hate, and desire. Desire leads to fear, fear breeds hatred and all three produce violence.

Finally, therefore, from the Dharmapada comes a gem which has been echoed by Teachers down the ages and ignored by mankind :

'Hate is not conquered by hate but by love.'

Non-killing, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence and non-receiving are called Yama. These. unbroken by time, place, purpose and caste-rules, are (universal) great vows.

—*Yoga-sutras* of Patanjali.

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TIRUPPAVAI

SWAMI PARAMATMANANDA

Of all the garlands of Divine perfume that bedecked the charming bosom of the cloud-coloured Sri Krishna, nothing ever touched and sweetened His heart more than the garland of flowers that Andal offered to Him after charging it with the undying fragrance of her black tresses ; for it led captive the proud conqueror of her heart. Yet, doubtless, no garlands of verses dedicated to Him ever touched and moved His soul to the extent of pouring forth in abundance His showers of Divine mercy, more than Tiruppavai since it was woven by the sheen of her wisdom out of the variegated flowers of Divine emotions that profusely blossomed in the garden of her heart. She was, indeed, as her name Godā implies, the gift of Mother Earth to God, the bestower of garlands, the bard that sang immortal songs. The whole poem is a masterpiece of classic art, redolent of sangam classics as she herself has characterised it. It is an idyll of exquisite charm, a ballad with a typical refrain, a lyric of sweetness rare because of its haunting rhythm and melody. It is a picture gallery presenting a variety of portraits of human nature of all shades as well as external nature. Therein lofty thoughts blend with sentiments, pure and profound without clash or conflict ; rhyme, alliteration and other literary devices serve more to conceal rather than betray art and urbanity is linked to rustic simplicity. In and through the realistic scenery which is highly impressive, there runs a suggestiveness of spiritual idealism of unfathomed depth that pervades the poem like a soul-uplifting aroma. Above all the whole poem is aglow with Divine fervour which is apparent in every line of the poem. No wonder then that religious-minded geniuses vie with one another in lavishing their wealth of learning on the poem with a view to revealing the philosophy of religion embedded in it by writing commentaries that after all prove appropriate and natural. The book has captured the imagination of the learned savants, the subtlest philosophers and the gifted musicians as much as the minds of illiterate folk, the devoted God-mad lover, and the prosaic reciter ; and thus its popularity is unrivalled even among the followers of alien faiths and dry philosophies. In short the poem is a gem of purest ray divine that ever embellished the jewel of Vaishnavaite religious literature.

Such superb beauty of the book is largely attributable to the fact of its being a replica of her life which was itself a poem of the growth and fulfilment of Divine bridal longing. Andal was born out of Prema, and was cradled up in an atmosphere of Krishna Prema, surcharged with the ideal of a spiritual marriage with Him. Rendered incapable by nature of brooking the very thought of wedding a mortal, she regarded herself as the destined bride of the Divine Enchanter of Vrindavan and poured forth all the energies of her soul, mind and body in a dedicated and concentrated endeavour to attain the feet of the Lord. Her apparent child-like fancy grew soon into a consuming passion, nay an exalted God-madness that knew no respite till it reached its consummation in mystic union with Him. Her candid confessions of her irrepressible longings ; her fasts and vigils undertaken with a view to propitiating Cupid, the God of love, culminating in her earnest entreaties to Him for fixing her up for Sri Krishna alone ; her appeal to the song-bird 'Kuyil' warbling in the grove to beckon her lover to her presence and her generous offer of precious rewards in return ; her prophetic dream of her marriage with the Lord ; her message of giant agony by the rain-laden clouds to her dark-hued lover ; her wistful jealous glances at the conch in His hand that often drinks the delicious nectar of His mouth ; her state of utter despondency ;

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her mild rebukes of her sweetheart's extreme callousness and self-complacency; her admonition to her kith and kin to transport her openly to the immediate presence of her lover as the only remedy for all her daily worsening maladies, physical and mental; and lastly her intense burning sensation in her body that could not be assuaged, save by contact with the articles that adorned the person of the Black God — all this finds a frank heart-moving word-portrait in her other work of 143 stanzas called *Nachiar Tirumozhi* (sacred utterances of the Mother).

Even at a tender age 'Prema' was the breath of her life and the soul of her being. Her divine devotion, wisdom-bred was ripening day by day, nay instant by instant; nevertheless it failed to evoke any sympathetic response from the living Lord in the temple of Srivilliputtur. The pangs of unrequited love compelled her to resort to the measures taken by love-stricken maidens of Brindavan in the self-same plight. Her imagination transported her to Gokulam and she, fancying Srivilliputtur as the blessed village of the cowherd clan, the young girls there as the Gopis, herself one among them, and the Lord in the temple as Sri Krishna, resolved to re-enact in her mind the scenes of the observance of Katyayani-vrata by the Gopis, which resulted in bringing showers of rain for their parched land and showers of mercy Divine for their still more parched hearts. It is these scenes that are depicted in Tiruppavai. The scene is laid in the village on the night of the full moon in the month of Margaseersha (December to January). Sri Krishna, the cynosure of the eyes and hearts of all mortals, was exercising such powerful spell on the minds of the young girls that they were running scandalously mad after Him at all odd hours in utter defiance of all rules of convention, decorum and morality. This exasperated the elderly men to the extent of shutting up the recalcitrants in the dungeons in their respective homes. The imprisoned girls in their dire distress sent their fervent prayers to Krishna, whose divine wrath inflicted a drought on their land and the consequent threat of destruction of cows and cowherds. With the intention of averting this catastrophe the shepherds released the girls and asked them to perform the prescribed worship of Goddess Katyayani with strict penance. But this involved the assistance of a boy as master of ceremonies; and none but Sri Krishna was suitable and available for the purpose. So the old men, to their chagrin, had to entrust the girls to his care asking him to give all the requisite help to them. Then the Gopis in high glee and divine ecstasy repaired to the abode of Sri Krishna who after spending some happy time advised them to return home and come again early in the second half of the night for receiving from Him the necessary materials. The damsels returned home to sleep; but the excitement caused by the prospective union with their darling Krishna made them restless. Those who rose up earlier went from door to door and awakened others who were all steeped in the happy contemplation on Krishna and His deeds. All assembled together and went with the ostensible purpose of fulfilling a vow, in a congregational procession to the palace of Lord Krishna to wake Him up and pray for the boon of parai (a drum signifying the necessary materials for the worship). Sri Krishna is roused and takes His seat in the audience hall, ready to listen to their petitions. But Andal, the leader of the party, prays for nothing earthly and craves only the privilege of eternal loving service to Him alone and for His sake alone, bound as they are to Him by inseparable soul-ties for ever. Thus ends Tiruppavai with the crowning prayer of a yearning soul, the prayer of prayers, the prayer for all hearts and for all times.

The metaphysical symbolism of the poem has made such an appeal to the spiritual genius of Sri Vaishnavaite Acharyas that they have unanimously accorded it the highest place possible in their daily sacred recitals of Ubhaya Vedanta (twin Vedanta in Sanskrit and Tamil). One of the verses, in the colophon

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usually included in the book, characterises the merit of the poem in these glowing terms :

> 'In vain the earth doth bear the burden of those mortals who know not the Tamil poem of Godai of 30 stanzas, which is the consumer of deadly sins, the guide to the feet of the supreme, and the seed of all Vedas.'

Sri Ramanuja, the Messiah of Vaishnavaism, used to chant these verses always while going out for collecting his Bhiksha (alms) and earned the proud appellation of 'Tiruppavai Jeer' (The Friar singing Tiruppavai). Religious-minded Sri Vaishnavaites regard it as a duty incumbent on them to chant the whole poem daily in the small hours of the dawn, failing which to repeat the 29th stanza containing the immortal prayer. The allegorical significance of the stanzas has been expanded so elaborately by the exalted teachers of wisdom that it is seen to convey a world of significance packed into a small compass and suffices to make a man of understanding a real devotee of the highest type. It is a repository of spiritual truths that form the quintessence of the Upanishads. The first five verses describe the code of conduct for those who have chosen the path of complete self-surrender to God with the intention of realizing His grace, and the glory of the Divine Name in which the doctrine is enshrined. The next ten picture Andal's awakening of the ten types of supreme companions — the Alwars, her spiritual parents — whose special traits are splendidly hit off by the words and adjuncts used in addressing them. All these girls after being gathered together went straight to the mansion of Nandagopa, the father of Sri Krishna and then awakened in order the gatekeeper of the abode, Nandagopa, Yasoda, Balarama, and Nappinnai, the daughter-in-law, and finally Sri Krishna — this is the purport of the next four stanzas and is suggestive of the mode of approaching the Supreme Being through the mediation of His Eternal Servants, and the grace of the Divine Mother. In the next five stanzas Andal begs of Him for 'parai' (the drum) and all other things for the worship ; and speaks exultingly of the rewards of ornaments, rich repasts and the like He has kept in store for them. Then in a spirit of utter humility and in an apologetic vein reveals her heart's desire of doing eternal flawless service to Him—which was kept concealed by the use of the term 'parai'. The last stanza is the 'phalasruti' and contains the name of the author, the nature of the work, and the benefits accruing to a sincere soul from the study of the poem.

Every line of the poem, which is verily 'a rare treasure house of felicitous expressions,' bears the stamp of artistic excellence. The author—the Eternal Bride ever pining for the presence of the Divine Consort, and a born dramatist of grand ideas, refined emotions and chaste diction—touches the inner chords of our being and leaves a lingering sweetness in our minds. Her invocation to the God of rain is a masterpiece of poetic language and imagery in which one beautiful simile has been worked out in perfection. Instead of comparing God to the clouds, she compares clouds to God, her chosen analogy, and requests the God of rain to imitate Him, in the production of clouds, flashes of lightning, thunder and showers of rain. Another instance of a happy analogy is furnished in stanza 23, wherein she wants Sri Krishna to sally forth out of His temple like the majestic lion sleeping his long winter sleep in the mountain lair, becoming wakeful and marching out. Such a realistic description with a wealth of minute details is possible only for a trained observer of the lion in his native surroundings. Again her description of nature in its morning freshness in a variety of ways, her keen interest in astronomical observations at the time of the dawn, her charming delineation of Yasoda, the sharp contrast of the cold winter without, with the warmth within and her intense familiarity with her companions to the extent of indulging in mild rebukes and even sharp taunts, yet without bordering on contempt or irreverence — all this has endeared the poem and Andal for ever to the votaries of Sri Vaishnavaism.

Moreover the poem is a marvel in condensation and expansion of ideas. The first stanza

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is an epitome of the whole poem, each line in the verse giving the clue to the ideas explained in the later verses. The line in the first verse 'Narayana alone will give us and only to us the parai (drum)' — gives the spiritual gist of the whole poem. The names in the illustrious line of Sri Vaishnavaite Acharyas — names to be recited daily by a Vaishnavaite with grateful reverence — are indicated in order by the verses from 6 to 20. The precious heritage of the 'three secret (sacred) teachings' (the eight-lettered mantra, the sacred couplet and the supreme concluding verse in the Gita), the five-fold Divine Forms, the five essential spiritual truths of all religions (the truths about the natures of the individual soul, the Supreme Being, the means of attainment, the goal and the obstacles) and others besides are inculcated in pithy pregnant phrases that are scattered throughout the poem.

In short Tiruppavai is an inexhaustible mine of profound wisdom, devotion, faith and self-surrender absolute. Its treasures lie too deep for the fertile imagination of the initiate, penetrating scholarship, or fervid emotion. Even saints of ordinary calibre despair of delving into and unearthing the gold of spiritual truths buried within. Sri Ramanuja, when he was once requested to expound Tiruppavai, remarked with a sigh: 'Rare indeed is the person qualified to listen to a discourse on Tiruppavai. He alone who has drunk deep of the essence of the Eternal Feminine in the soul and its relation to God the Eternal Masculine deserves to hear the exposition of the poem, not even the Divine spouse longing for union with Him. She who took birth as the combined essence of the ten Alwars—our Andal — she is at once the solitary expounder and herself the listener. Hers was the heritage of their accumulated wisdom, she being their only daughter.' Even the Alwars needed an awakener and donor of wisdom divine, free from delusion; but the unprecedented miracle of Andal lay in awakening the Awakener of all souls and teaching the primordial Teacher of all. Whereas the Alwars followed the 'Seshatva' pattern of Lakshmana in the Ramayana, and Periyalwar, the 'pāratantriya' example of Bharata, the daughter Andal chose the 'Bhāgavata Pāratantriya' ideal of Satrughna. The Alwars and Lakshmana desired the ecstatic enjoyment of God through personal service; Periyalwar and Bharata longed for the weal of God alone in utter forgetfulness of their self, but Satrughna and Andal lived, moved and had their being in the service of the Supreme Servants of God—the culmination of the ideal of devotion and its consummation. Such is the verdict of souls of illumination, not self-sought but God-sought and divinely bestowed.

THIRUVOYMOZHI

R. S. DESIKAN

In a period when the whole air is astir with the thrill of surging ideas, passions and emotions, we come across a remarkable outburst of creative activity in every field of knowledge. The long span of years extending from the fourth century A.D. to the ninth is unique in its production of a body of devotional literature in the land of the Tamils, the like of which the world is yet to see. Both the Vaishnava and the Saiva hymnists have woven unfading wreaths of songs in praise of their Maker. Their rich fragrance floats down the ages.

These mighty singers of devotion have greatly profited by the great heritage of literary tradition which the Tamil poets of the Sangham Age have bequeathed to them. The Sangham classics smack of war and love; but in the immortal songs of these God-intoxicated men are heard the voices of a different war

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waged and won. In them are struck the unearthly notes of divine love. What is of the earth has been transfigured into something strange and ineffable by the alchemy of their supreme genius. We really wander in their realms of gold.

There are twelve 'Alwars'; and the word 'Alwar' means one who is lost in the splendour and glory of God. Each one is a singer in the court of the Lord, but Nammalwar is the crowned monarch among them.

Their songs are but chapels and chantries of the great cathedral of the Thiruvoymozhi of Nammalwar. It is like Jacob's ladder that bridges heaven and earth. In its richness and amplitude of luminous wisdom, in its wide range, in its breadth and height of vision, in its all-embracing catholicity of spirit which admits to its fold all the warring sects and creeds of the world, in its supreme expression of the sheer triumph of the spirit over the titanic forces of darkness, in its spiritual splendour and lyric rapture of songs of rare excellence it stands unsurpassed in the domain of mythical poetry.

Nammalwar belongs to the 8th century A.D. and sees the first light of the day in Thirukkurugoor. It stands on the lovely banks of the Thambraparani which winds its way through the Tinnevelly district. The place is called 'Alwar Thirunagari' after the immortal memories of Nammalwar who sits enthroned in the heart of every Vaishnavite.

He is a born mystic; and his life of inner perfection may be said to be a noble commentary on the message of the Vedic seers of old. In the Thiruvoymozhi is distilled their wisdom which he has reached not through mere study or the laborious process of reasoning but through his intuition. He comes of the lowest rung of the ladder of the four-fold caste system of our land; but he commands the homage of the twice-born. Madhurakavi, a Brahmin, recognizes in him the very anchor of his moral and spiritual being. Drunk with delight, he sings the songs of Nammalwar and scatters his message of peace and goodwill wherever he wanders over hills and dales. It is the Thiruvoymozhi that has shaped the furniture of Sri Ramanuja's capacious mind and heart. Falling under the mighty spell of Nammalwar, Sri Vedanta Desika, who is considered to be the great cham of religion, theology and metaphysics of his age, approaches him with bated breath and whispering humbleness, and proclaims to the world that only in the light of the Thiruvoymozhi he is able to unravel all the hidden mysteries of the Vedas.

Such an abiding hold it has on the imagination, understanding and feeling of a succession of commentators, whose reactions to this text have resulted in various enormous commentaries, the range of which may stagger the mind of any lay reader. The more the commentator digs into it, the more he comes upon the hither-to-unknown treasures of wisdom. It is indeed an inexhaustible mine of mystery and wonder. The beautiful commentaries that spring out of their ceaseless delving have proved in an abundant measure that criticism may become creative in its appeal. In the commentaries one may feel all the morning dew of freshness and the fine careless rapture of astounding original discoveries.

In the opening of this collection of soul-stirring songs, one is greatly struck with the definition which he gives of God. According to him, He is the highest among the highest and the loftiest among the most lofty. It is He that endows the mind with the light of wisdom which chases away the encircling gloom of ignorance. He is the Lord of the angels, who know no easeful sloth, but are ever active in their unflagging devotion to Him. 'Oh, Mind, fall at the shining feet of the God and worship Him.'

The only way to reach Him is to lay the axe at the root of 'Thou' and 'Thine'; and there is no use in building one's faith in the fast fading pleasures of the senses, which generally pall on us. They are far more fleeting than the fitful flashes of lightning.

Nammalwar gains the crown of His grace by weaving an immortal garland of songs. It

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is through 'Gitangili' that the Alwars and the Nayanmars have been able to gather a glimpse of the splendour of the soul within.

Tagore strives to reach God through his song-offerings :

'When thou commandest me to sing, it seems that my heart would break with pride ; and I look to thy face, and tears come to my eyes.

All that is harsh and dissonant in my life melts into one sweet harmony — and my adoration spreads wings like a glad bird on its flight across the sea.

I know thou takest pleasure in my singing, I know that only as a singer I come before thy presence.

I touch by the edge of the far-spreading wing of my song thy feet which I could never aspire to reach.

Drunk with the joy of singing, I forget myself and call thee friend who art my Lord.'

— *Gitanjali.*

Nammalwar has a lofty conception of poetry. According to T. S. Eliot, poetry is just an escape from emotions and an escape from personality. The poet becomes purely a channel of expression ; and he is a reed in the hands of His Maker. Nammalwar's poetry is indeed a noble commentary on T. S. Eliot's definition.

Nammalwar addresses the poets of his age who have misused their God-given talents and whored after strange gods. He feels that God has stolen into the soul of his being and breathes His melodies eternally new. Tagore bursts into a similar vein :

'Thou hast made me endless, such is thy pleasure. This frail vessel thou emptiest again and again, and fillest it ever with fresh life.

This little flute of a reed thou hast carried over hills and dales, and hast breathed through it melodies eternally new.

At the immortal touch of thy hands my little heart loses its limits in joy and gives birth to utterance ineffable.

Thy infinite gifts come to me only on these very small hands of mine. Ages pass, and still thou pourest, and still there is room to fill.'

— *Gitanjali.*

Having a high conception of his calling, Nammalwar exhorts his own fellow poets to sing in praise of the Lord; for poetry woven at the loom of one's intense God-given imagination will not only build for them the kingdom of the earth, but also will open the doors of a new life beyond.

Nammalwar sings :

'Many are the poets in your court, but you have chosen me—an humble reed to breathe your eternal mystery.'

In Tagore, we find the same idea enshrined :

'Masters are many in your hall, and songs are sung there at all hours. But the simple carol of this novice struck at your love. One plaintive little strain mingled with the great music of the world, and with a flower for a prize you came down and stopped at my cottage door.'

— *Gitanjali.*

One cannot but be impressed with the similarity of ideas in these two poets.

Tradition goes that Nammalwar is quite oblivious of the affairs of the world. One has to confess that his life is shrouded in a mystery. His writings are the only authentic information regarding the strange and marvellous agonising searchings of his heart.

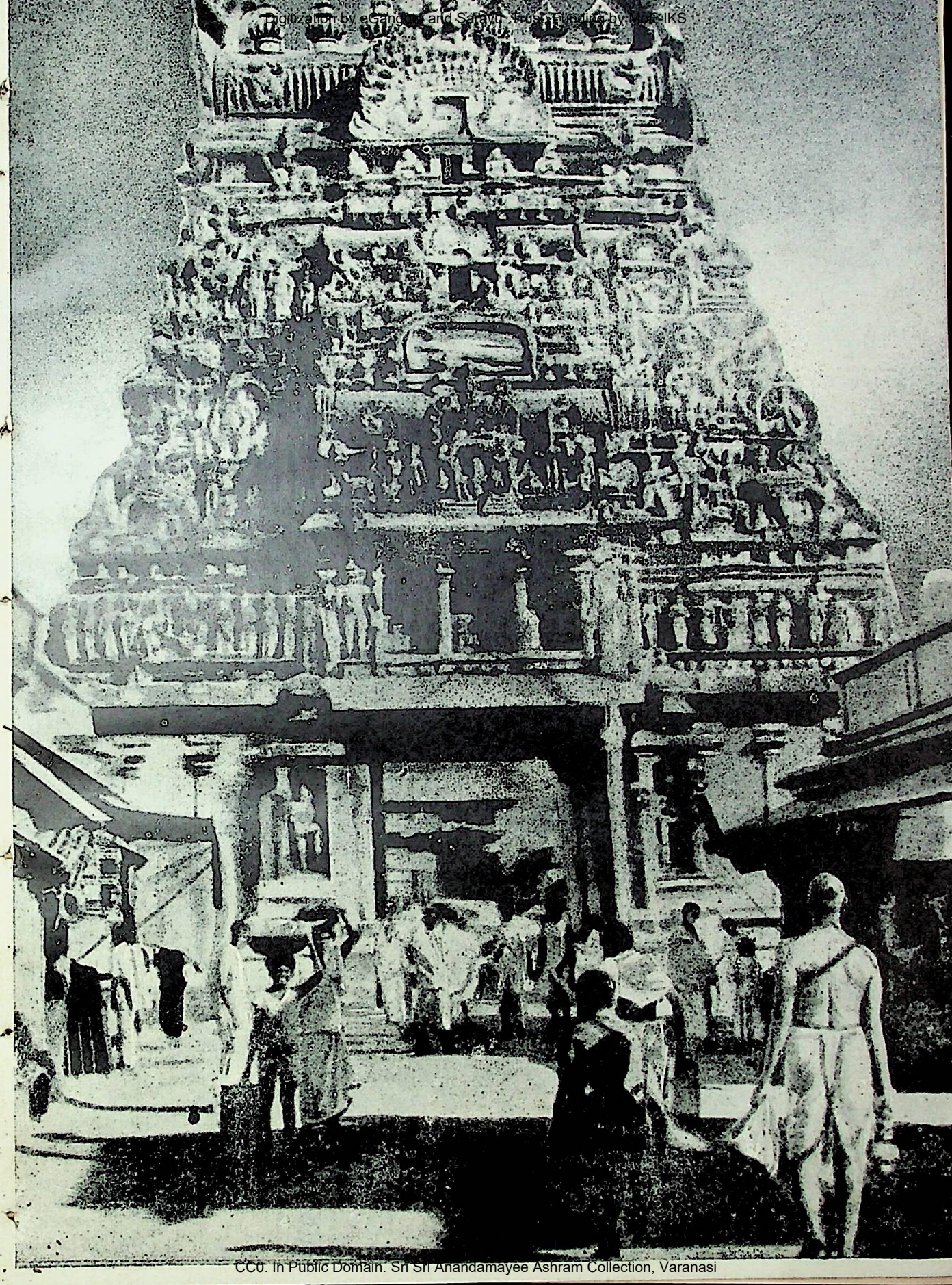
The supreme fact that no man becomes a saint in his sleep is true of this Alwar who has had to pass through the valley of the shadow of death. His life is a ceaseless journey from darkness to light, from the torments of the senses to the serenity of soul and the everlasting peace born of the ever-growing inner light. His spiritual triumph has resulted in hoisting the banner of his peace and joy in the inmost citadel of his being for ever besieged by the warring senses. The night of his soul has given way to a perpetual dawn. Nammalwar may have sung with the poet Henry Vaughan :

'I saw Eternity the other night
Like a great Ring of pure and endless light.'

His sense of the agony of separation and the thrill of joy at the re-union of the Lord is enshrined in the conventional relationship of the bride and bridegroom. God is our eternal lover, and we are his brides. This conception is as old as the hills. In *The Song of Solomon,* we recognize the intimate and loving link of the lover with his beloved. An

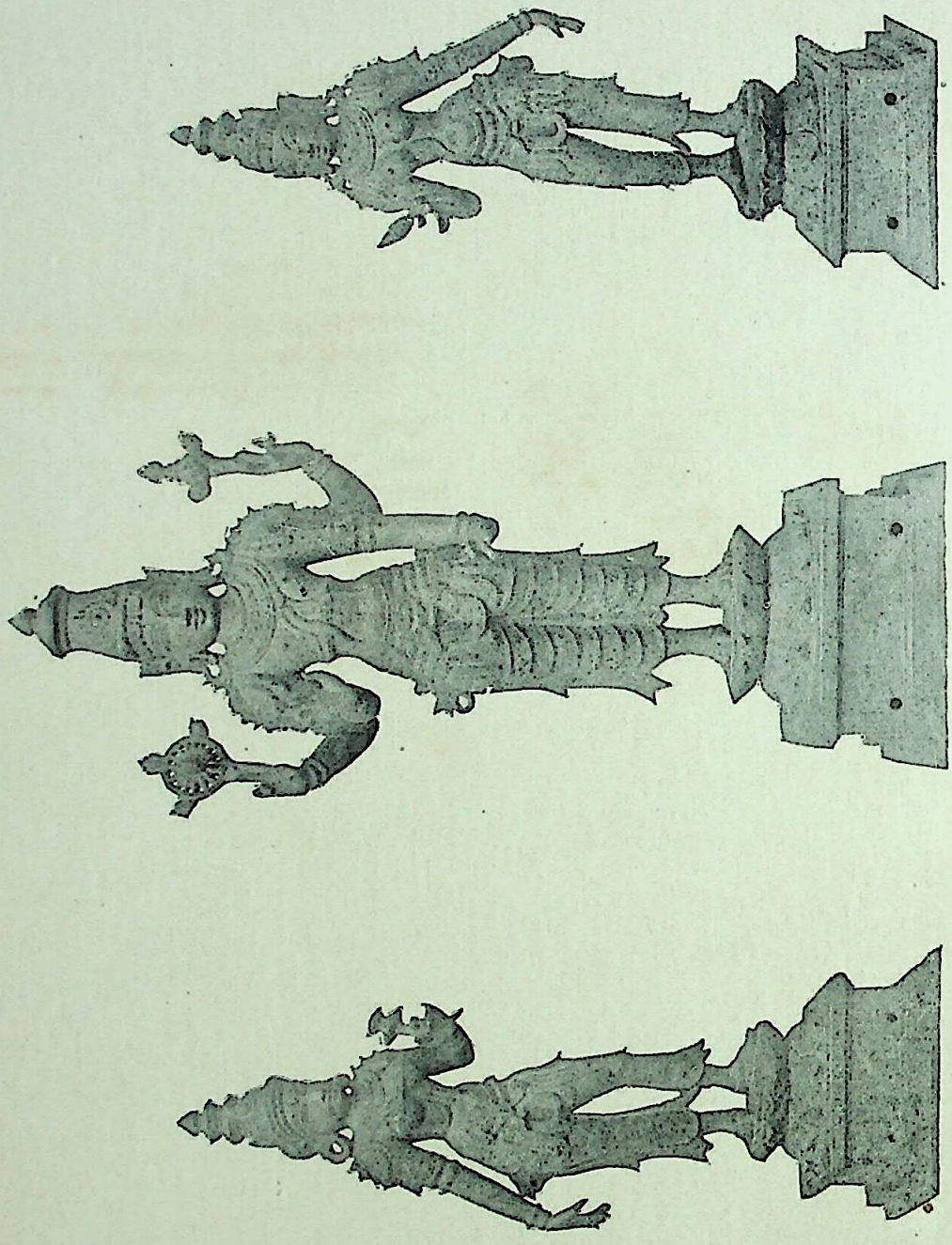
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Vishnu with consorts

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hour may lengthen into Eternity and an age may crowd into an hour. It all depends on the presence and absence of the lover who plays hide and seek with his beloved.

Innumerable are the poems of Nammalwar dealing with this aspect of love; and they are marked by a deep tenderness of feeling, daring imagination and unmatched felicity of expression. There are literary echoes; and these snatches of the Sangham classics — snatches that have been woven into the texture of his composition bear ample evidence to his deep scholarship and learning. He is at once a scholar and a mystic.

God needs us much more than we need Him. God like the hound pursues man down the arches of years and shepherds the thin wavering humanity into the cote of His everlasting mercy. It is through man's eyes the Lord sees; it is through man's ears that He listens to His own eternal music ringing for ever in the long corridors of time.

Tagore's song also is of the same mould and tune :

'What divine drink wouldst thou have, my God, from this overflowing cup of my life?

My poet, is it thy delight to see thy creation through my eyes and to stand at the portals of my ears silently to listen to thine own eternal harmony?

Thy world is weaving words in my mind and thy joy is adding music to them. Thou givest thyself to me in love and then feelest thine own entire sweetness in me.' — *Gitanjali.*

By honouring Tagore, the far west has really honoured a South Indian saint of the 8th century. Nammalwar feels that he is Lord's consummate cup at which He slakes His thirst. He has drunk deep at the fountain-heads of spiritual wisdom. The harp of his life is in tune with the myriad strings of the mighty lyre of the Maker. He has become so one with Him, that he sings in the following strain :

'I am the earth that spreads before me
I am the sky that shines from afar
I am the fire that is all aglow with its tongues of flames
I am the wind that blows over the sea-girt earth
I am the dark deep that raves and moans on alien shores.'

He has the most daring and audacious imagination which makes him burst into an astonishing manner :

'I am the beauteous and bright heaven.
I am as well the hideous, yawning hell below.'

In the ceaseless patter of the rain, in the loud thunder of the groaning cloud, in the music of the wanton wind, and in the songs of the rills that chatter down the mountain slopes and in the distant moan of the sea and in the chirp of the early awakened birds, Nammalwar recognizes the voice of the Lord.

He is an immanent transcendental idealist; and according to him, matter and soul form the body of the Supreme Being. His conception of God cannot but have a deep hold on us; Heaven is not a distant place of peace and happiness, far beyond the clouds. The moment one cuts asunder the tangled obscurities of life, one enters the kingdom of God, which is nothing but the inner sanctuary of one's being. Besides, he believes that one may toll even the death-knell of death and rear the kingdom of God on the vast green meadows of the earth. He has preached that all the warring creeds of the world are but several shining paths leading to the far-off shrine of the Lord. In this sense he may be called the morning star of Sri Ramakrishna, in whom one may find the very parliament of all religions.

Heaven is not the monopoly of a privileged few, but it is the decree of fate that the earth-born shall enter the kingdom of God. Each one is a pilgrim of eternity; and in God's good time each one will reach the celestial city of the Lord beyond.

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TIRUVACAKAM

V. A. DEVASENAPATI

Of the Śaivite devotional works traditionally classified as twelve, the Tiruvācakam with its companion volume called the *Tirukkovaiyār* is reckoned the eighth. The date of its composition has not been definitely fixed. Scholars are divided in their opinions and the dates vary from the 4th century to the 9th century A.D. This much is certain that the Tiruvācakam has been popular in Tamilnad for several centuries now. Dr G. U. Pope says :

> 'It is quite certain that the influence of these poems in South India is like that of the Psalms among Christians, and that they have touched for generations the hearts of the vast majority of the Tamil-speaking people.'

Dr Pope translated it into English. Those who have read it in translation also are deeply impressed by the lofty religious experience recorded therein. Friedrich Heiler makes references to the Tiruvācakam in his book *Prayer*. It is significant that in describing Christian prayer, he quotes the Tiruvācakam :

> 'Christian prayer is, therefore, a spiritual echo ; it is God's will sounding in the human heart and resounding up to the Heaven whence it comes,' as A. Stolz remarks. In the deepest sense, therefore. the prayer of the devout soul is God's own prayer ; it is the great God praying through the small heart and weak mouth of man. 'The tongue itself,' says Mānikkavāçakar, 'which cries to Thee, nay all the powers of my being which cry to Thee — are all Thine.'

Mānikkavācakar was born in Tiruvādavūr near Madurai. He became an accomplished scholar at a very early age and his fame spread to the Pāndiyan king's court. The king sent for him and, being pleased with his accomplishments, appointed him chief minister. Mānikkavācakar justified the king's choice by his efficient administration. But, while outwardly he was preoccupied with the affairs of the State, inwardly he was aching for a guru who would guide him in his spiritual life. Soon an opportunity presented itself. Messengers came to the court and informed the king that horse-dealers had landed on the east coast with fine horses. Purchase of new horses was necessary to replace those lost by death or disease. The king sent Mānikkavācakar with a large sum of money to purchase horses. While Mānikkavācakar was on his way, he saw under a tree a venerable guru surrounded by his disciples. He realised that this was the Lord Himself. He surrendered himself completely unto the Lord Who was graciously pleased to accept him. The Lord asked Mānikkavācakar to remain in the world for sometime longer, visiting shrines and singing His praises. Mānikkavācakar, had in the mean time, given away all the money he had brought with him for purchase of horses in charity and become a recluse. This naturally led to trouble with the king who wanted horses or his money back. The saint was subjected to many ordeals for the recovery of the money. The Lord was pleased to convert jackals into horses and to come Himself in the guise of a horse-dealer to deliver the horses to the king. After the horses were taken to the royal stable and the horse-dealer had departed, the 'horses' became jackals again, created havoc and ran away. Infuriated by this, the king subjected the saint to punishment again in the hot sun on the sands of the river Vaigai. The Lord caused floods in the river which threatened the town. The king realised that he had wronged Mānikkavācakar. He requested the saint to take steps to prevent the floods destroying the town. Mānikkavācakar ordered that one member from each house in the town should carry earth to put up a dam against the floods. There was a poor woman who made her living by selling rice-cakes. She was too old to carry earth herself. While she was looking for some one to help her, the Lord Himself came as a labourer and offered His services. Though

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engaged to do the work, He was playful and indifferent. At the end of the day, when the king found that the old woman's portion was not attended to properly, he caned the labourer employed by her. Lo ! as the cane descended on the back of the Lord, He dropped a basketful of earth, thus stopping the floods and disappeared. The blow was felt by every living thing including the king. Every one realised that it was the Lord Himself Who came in the guise of a labourer. The king apologised to the saint for all the ill-treatment meted out to him and begged him to take up rulership of the country. But the saint had nothing more to do with the country and its governance. He took leave of the king and started visiting shrines on his way to Cidambaram. While he was in Cidambaram, the Lord Himself came as a brahmin and, requesting the saint to dictate the songs he had sung, wrote them down. He requested the saint to compose a work with bridal mysticism as its theme. Thus the *Tiruvācakam* and the *Tirukkovaiyār* composed by the saint, were written down by the Lord Himself. These were found in the temple by the priests. When they requested the saint to explain the meaning of these works, he pointed to the sacred image of the Lord as the meaning of the songs and disappeared therein. The saint thus indicated that the meaning of a sacred work is best understood in and by personal experience, not by commentaries, oral or written.

While any devotional work can be described as a pilgrim's progress from the secular to the spiritual, such a description is particularly appropriate in the case of the Tiruvācakam. Three pictures are painted of the soul in its pilgrimage, one of several births (sub-human, human and superhuman) ; another of conditions in the pre-natal state ; and the third of the trials and temptations after birth. Here they are :

1. *Various embodiments* :

Grass was I, shrub was I, worm, tree,
Full many a kind of beast, bird, snake,
Stone, man, and demon. 'Midst Thy hosts
I served
The form of mighty Asuras, ascetics, gods I bore.
Within these immobile and mobile forms of life,
In every species born, weary I've grown,
great Lord.

2. *Human embodiment* — pre-natal state :

On earth girt by the watery seas, from elephant
to ant,
Through many matrices I passed,
Obtained a human form within my mother's
womb.
.....

The saint goes on to give details of the dangers to which life is exposed from the first month to the tenth. It is no small achievement to survive all these dangers and be born alive.

3. *Human embodiment* — post-natal state :

There was I born into the sad sea of th'
afflictive life.
Then during each year as it met me
I gained and hoarded gains. How varied was
my life
Morning's routine, hunger in noontide hour,
and night
For sleep. In journey's oft I lived.
Jet blocks, and crimson lips, and radiant smiles
were hers ;—
Into love's sea I plunged.
.....
In the wide marts where foolish worldlings toil
I lived, still slave to fierce desires.
I lived by sea of learning multiform ;
I lived in sorrow men call wealth ;
I lived 'mid ancient stings of poverty,
And thus in varied forms and fortunes spent
my days
Then wondrous thought of the Divine—socalled
arose.
Soon as I knew that Being, free from hate,
unique,
Delusive powers in ever-changing millions
Began beguiling varied play
Relations, neighbours, came around,
With fluent tongue they urged their 'atheism'
Friends around — (Such herds of cattle old !),
Seiz'd me, call'd, hurried to and fro ;
The Brahman said, 'the way of penance is
supreme' ;
And others showed the law of trusting love !
Sectarian disputants complacently
Discordant tenets shouted loud and fought
Then haughty Vedant [1] creed unreal came, —

[1] The actual word in the text is māyāvāda, rendered by Dr Pope as Vedant. The quotations given here are from Dr Pope's translation.

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Whirled, dashed, and roared like furious hurricane.

Lokāyathan a glistening mighty snake
Brought cruel poisoned heresies
Whilst these delusions, endless girt me round,
Lest I should go astray, He laid His hand on me.

These lines show that even after the soul turns God-ward, trials and temptations do not cease. But God is not unmindful of the sufferings of the soul. In fact, as the saint says :

The mother's thoughtful care her infant feeds.
Thou deign'st with greater love to visit sinful me.

Even before the child cries for it or when it is asleep, the mother, with kind forethought, feeds it at the appropriate time. Our Heavenly Mother (may we not call God our Mother ?) is even more considerate than our earthly one. There is a divine purpose in the soul undergoing ordeals. It has, by gradual spiritual education, to be weaned from all evil, to be loosened from the bonds of ānava, māyā and karma. In fact, creation, destruction, etc. of the universe are for the purpose of saving souls.

.....All worlds
Thou dost create, protect, destroy, enrich with grace, Release.

Mānikkavācakar makes it very clear that it is the All-Highest Who came down to this earth to save him.

The One most precious Infinite to earth came down and

Thee, Endless one, benignly manifest diffusing light, — as Man, I saw Thee come.

Is the Lord's grace available for man alone ? The saint records a number of instances which show that the Lord cares for all forms of life, sub-human not excepted.

Thou went gracious to the litter of the boar-praise !

The Lord's grace is available to all forms of life. But is it earned by the soul by its deeds ? No. The soul has, no doubt, to engage in good deeds, disinterestedly and unselfishly. But no amount of goodness can entitle the soul to grace. His grace is given freely. If the soul sets store by its deeds and claims, like the Jew in *The Merchant of Venice*

'My deeds upon my head ! I crave the law,
The penalty and forfeit of my bond,'

it will only tighten its bonds,

'in the Course of Justice, none of us
Should see salvation.'

Therefore we pray for mercy,

'The quality of mercy is not strain'd
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath.'

The saint is frequently amused by the comedy of his own salvation. He considers himself utterly unworthy of salvation. Hence he gives all praise to the Lord :

Even me He took as something worth, like dog in sumptuous litter borne.

What does the saint pray for ? Not for heavenly pleasures, not for escape from hell, not even for cessation of birth and death. He prays that he should be in the midst of devotees of the Lord, that he should be unceasingly aware of the Lord.

We may sum up his successful pilgrimage in his own words :

A way that was no rightful way I followed,
deeming it the way —
That I might seek no meaner way, but only
seek His sacred grace
To gain, — He, whom no signs describe, His
mystic Dance has given to know !
'Twas thus the Dancer gave me grace ; O Rapture ! Who so blest as I ?

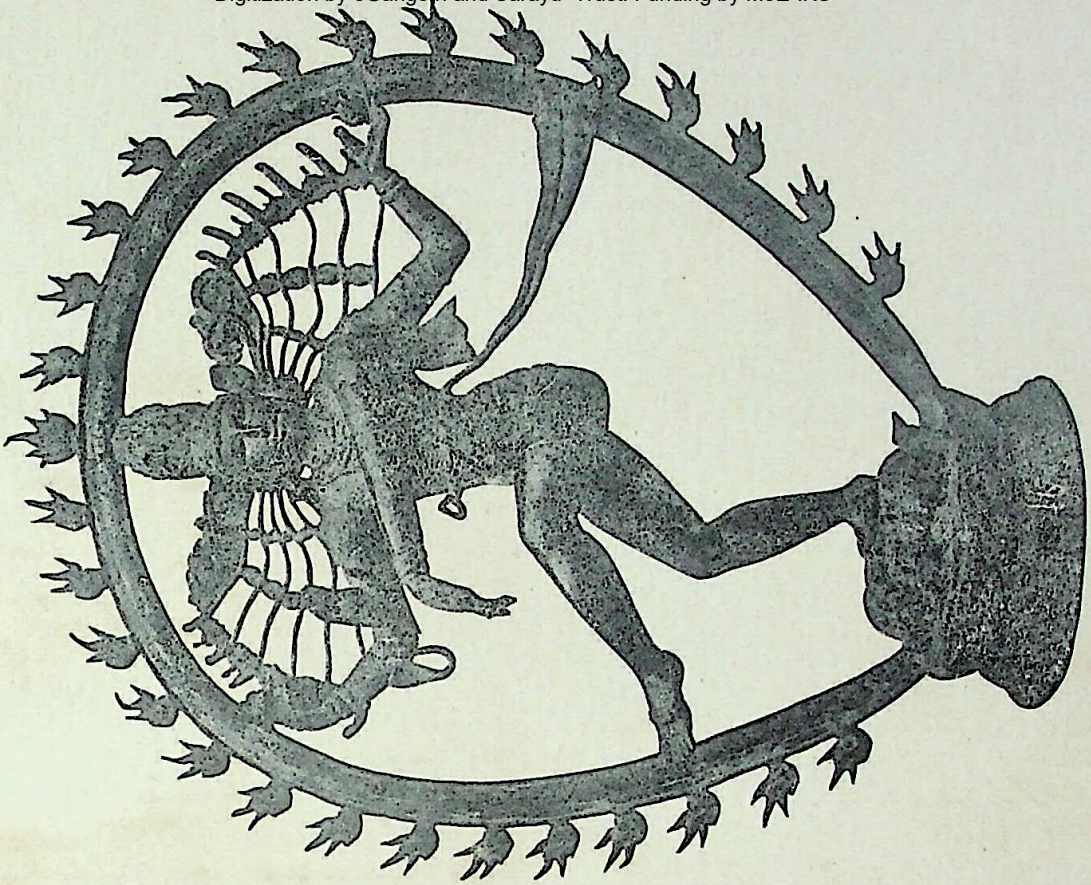
In brief, the Tiruvācakam is a gospel of grace.

May I attain to that beloved mansion of His, where those men that are devoted to God are happy, where flows the perennial fountain of nectar, just by the mighty striding feet of Vishnu, in His Supreme Abode.

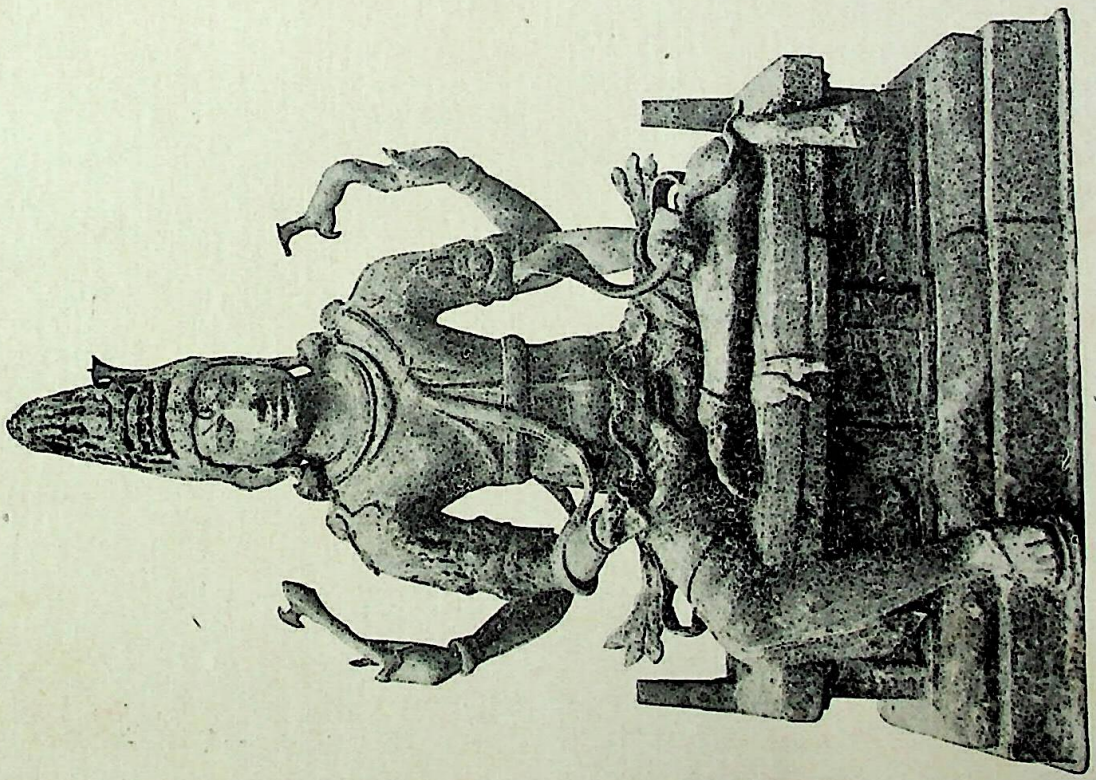
—*Rig Veda*, I. 154. 5.

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Nataraja

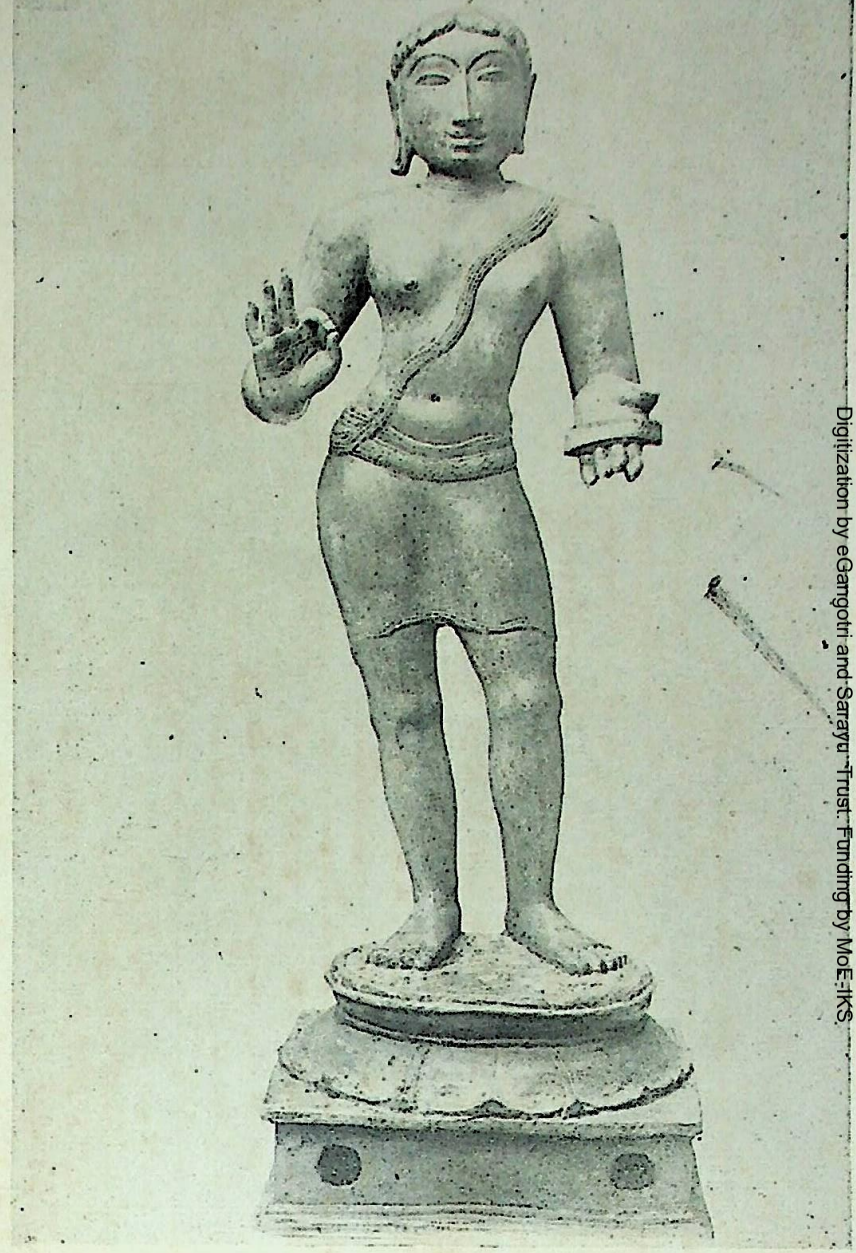


Siva as Vishāpaharana

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Subrahmanya



Saint Manikyavacakar

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THIRUPPUGAZH

V. S. CHENGALVARAYA PILLAI

Just as Thevaram is sacrosanct and pleasing to Siva and Nalayira Prabandam to Mahavishnu, so is Thiruppugazh to Lord Muruga (Subramanya). Before expounding the essence and greatness of Thiruppugazh, it is necessary to set out briefly the life of Arunagiri-nathar, the author of Thiruppugazh. In the absence of any historical record about the parentage and life of this author we have to depend only on the internal evidences available about him in Thiruppugazh and his other works. From such evidences the following particulars about Arunagiri-nathar could be gleaned.

(1) That he lived in the 15th century is ascertainable from the fact that in one of his stanzas, he refers to a King by name Prabuda Deva Maharaja who, according to epigraphical notes, lived in the 15th century.

(2) In his younger days he had studied Thevaram, Thirukkural, Thirumandiram, Karigai (a grammar work), etc.

(3) In spite of advice from elders, he fell into evil ways with women of bad character with the result that he became subject to dreadful diseases, like leprosy — and people, even those who were near and dear, shunned his company.

(4) He became disgusted with his life and decided to commit suicide by falling from the tower of Arunachaleswarar Temple. Just then, as a result of his Tapas in his previous births, Lord Muruga appeared before him, smeared sacred ashes on his forehead, wrote the 'Sadaksharam' with his Javelin (Vél), on his tongue and blessed him with *Nayana Dikshā* with the result that Arunagirinathar instantly became master of all sciences and arts. At the Lord's behest he began to sing His praises in the form of a new kind of verses known as '*Sandham*', the first line of the first stanza having been dictated to him by the Lord Himself. It is these stanzas which are said to be 16,000 in number that came to be known as Thiruppugazh. Of these 16,000 only 1,300 are now available in print through the exertions of my father late V. T. Subramania Pillai. After receiving God's blessings Arunagirinathar visited shrine after shrine in all parts of India and sang in praise of Lord Muruga in those shrines. Tradition has it that he had a discussion with Villiputhoorar the author of *Bharatham* and won in a competition with him and that in a later competition with one Sambandāndan, a Devi disciple, he was able to make Lord Muruga Himself appear in a Sabha before Prabuda Devaraja and that he, at the request of Prabuda Deveraja to fetch Parijatha flower from the celestial world, made *Parakaya Pravesa* by entering the dead body of a parrot leaving his body in the Arunachaleswarar Temple Tower. The king at the instigation of Sambandāndan had the body burnt before Arunagirinathar returned with the flower. Arunagirinathar, who brought the flower, finding that his body was disposed of rightly understood the situation, contented himself with the idea that it was the Lord's pleasure that his mortal coils should so disappear. It is also said that as a parrot, he gave to the world his immortal works known as *Kandar anubhuti* and *Tiru vaguppu* and that he remains even now as a parrot in the hands of Parvathi Devi. Now let us turn to his main work — Thiruppugazh.

As already stated, the Thiruppugazh stanzas are of a peculiar form of versification full of melody and the verses are amenable to various forms of 'Thālam' — Time measure and the 1,300 stanzas now in print are in 1,008 forms of Sandham, i.e. the rhythmic movement of the verse. To quote one or two instances

1. *Thanana thandham thanana thandham*
   Thanana thandham thanandham
2. *Thana thana thana thanana*
   Thana thandha thatha thandha
   Thatha thandha thandha thana

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Authors of works on music declare that Thiruppugazh is a model work serving as a guide book on the exposition of all kinds of Thālam. That Arunagirinathar is the Ādi-karthā of Sandha works will be evident from the fact that later authors who composed stanzas in this form named their work also as Thiruppugazh such as 'Devi Thiruppugazh', 'Pancharatna Thiruppugazh', etc. conveying the idea that the form of their verses follows that of Arunagirinathar's Thiruppugazh.

The teachings conveyed by Thiruppugazh are of a very high order and are worthy to be memorised and followed. Both for its poetic excellence and the excellence of its teachings Thiruppugazh stands as one of the foremost works in Tamil literature. The central idea of Thiruppugazh is that to attain salvation it is very essential to give up the sense of ego and the desires in respect of land, money, and women. In one of his stanzas, he states addressing Muruga thus :

'My Lord ! Will it be beneath your dignity to impart to this poor soul that Upadesam which you, as Guru, made to Siva, your Father ?'

And in another place, he says :

'My Lord ! If you are not prepared to impart to me the "Rahasya Upadesam" which you made to Siva, be pleased at least to bless me by enabling me to utter your holy names and to remove from my mind all desires.'

It would appear that Arunagirinathar was later blessed with the Rahasya Upadesam which Lord Muruga made to Siva ; for, when he worshipped at Vallimalai, the holy place where Lord Muruga Himself went and married Valli, the daughter of Maha-Vishnu brought up by a hunter king, Arunagirinathar says :

'My Lord ! On coming to this place, I have understood the significance of the Rahasya Upadesam which you made to Siva and later on to me. It is this. Because Valli, leaving all sense of egoism placed her full faith in you and surrendered herself to you, you were pleased to go personally to Vallimalai and take her as your consort, thus revealing the fact that God will Himself offer all help to him who, leaving all sense of "I" and "Mine" surrenders himself to God.'

This Dharmam of the Lord, Arunagirinathar styles as 'Valli Sanmārga Dharmam'.

We shall now quote some of the important prayers of Arunagirinathar as gathered from the prayers he makes to the Lord. His prayers are :

(1) My Lord ! Please favour me with such boons as you yourself think fit, the selection not being mine.

(2) Just before the soul departs from this body please bless me with the thought of chanting your holy names.

(3) In no birth of mine should I suffer from any disease.

(4) May I serve your devotees and may I have the good fortune of being in their company.

(5) My life-time should not be wasted and may I always sing your praises chanting your 'Sadakshara'.

(6) May I give up all desires.

(7) When Yama, the God of Death, appears before me to take away my life, may you be pleased to come to me and send away Yama telling him that I am 'Your Man'.

(8) In my sleep, in my talk with others and in whatever I do, may my thoughts centre on your Holy Feet, on your holy names and on your boundless grace.

(9) May my mind which works like a whirlpool attain quietude and may I during my life-time live with good commonsense.

(10) May my mind always centre on things that are 'Sat' — things that are good, virtuous and moral — eschewing things that are 'Asat' — things that are wicked, useless and immoral.

(11) Whether I am in affluent circumstances or in indigent condition may I never forget your grace.

Speaking about the Lord's grace, he says :

(1) My Lord ! You live in the heart of your faultless devotees.

(2) You bless them with whatever they want.

(3) You are in the holy books of every religion.

(4) You are true to every true soul and false to those who are not true.

Arunagirinathar's teachings

(1) True Bhakti is the sole way to attain salvation.

(2) Why practise such difficult yogams where you have by difficult means to control your breathing etc. when there is the easy course of attaining

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salvation by concentrating your mind on His Holy Feet.

(3) Shun all discussions about superiority of one religion over another. God is in the temple of every Faith.

(4) The Lord is no respector of caste or community. His grace is available equally to all devotees.

(5) Don't hanker after Siddhis (miraculous powers) because the only really valuable Siddhi is the study and understanding of the Lord's grace.

(6) Even when you sneeze, make it a practice to utter the Lord's name.

(7) Make it a point to give at least a morsel of food to the poor before you take your food.

(8) Control your mind, give up anger, be charitable and never be haughty.

Thiruppugazh is popular because of the Samarasa Bhāvam of Arunagirinathar's views. For, while he centres all his praise on Muruga, the Lord whose grace he attained, he speaks in high terms of other Gods as well — such as Ganapati, Siva, Parvati Devi and Mahavishnu. It is after looking into and greatly admiring all the fineness and superiority of Arunagirinathar's Upadésams, that the great sage Thayumanavar himself praises Arunagirinathar thus :

'My Lord and Father, Arunagiri ! No one till now has given out the truth in such explicit terms as you. Great souls have found themselves unable to give out explicitly what Reality is. Why ! Even God Dhakshinamurti gave his Upadesams in the most secret way by mere signs with his fingers !'

It will be evident from the above facts that Thiruppugazh is a treasure book not only for Bhaktas but also for students of Tamil literature and music.

TIRUKKURAL

M. VARADARAJAN

The Tirukkural has been the fountain of inspiration to generations of saints, poets and statesmen. It is a string of 1,330 profound aphorisms in Tamil by the saint Tiruvalluvar, generally assigned to the first century A.D. There is in every chapter of the work the divine spark of thought and of form, the creative touch of reason as well as of poetry. This is in three parts, the first 38 chapters dealing with 'Aram' (virtue of righteousness), the next 70 chapters dealing with statesmanship, and the rest 25 with love.

Tiruvalluvar's religion, occupation, etc., still remain a mystery. 'Tiru' is a prefix of honour and respect, whereas 'Valluvar' is the name of the officer of a state proclaiming royal edicts seated on an elephant's back. How strange that the author of this famous work, unsurpassed in popularity and the product of ancient Tamil culture, is not even known by his proper name. But it is a blessing in disguise, on account of this mystery, several religions are claiming the author of this great work to belong to them as seven cities contended for the honour of being accounted the birthplace of the author of the Iliad and the Odyssey. Perhaps he wanted to belong to none of them, or to all of them. He stands above all races and sects, and teaches a general human morality and wisdom. He based his immortal work on his studies and experiences discarding the prejudices of various religions and controverting sects, and transcending all limits of nation, caste and creed. In his preface to 'Kural' C. Rajagopalachari says :

'It is claimed by many that Tiruvalluvar was a Jain. I do not accept this theory. Tiruvalluvar was one of those rare and great men whose catholic spirit rose above all denominations and whose vision was not clouded by dogma or prejudice of any kind. His teachings elude classification on any denominational basis.'

The word 'Kural' in the name of this great classic, denotes the metre of the poem, a short couplet in a terse form. Every chapter

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contains ten couplets of this metre and deals with a subject.

The first part begins with the chapter in praise of God and it stresses the value of the worship of God. Of what avail is learning, if the learned do not adore God who is Immaculate wisdom? (2).* Ills of life never touch those who cling to Him who has no likes or dislikes (4).

After singing in praise of rain, the poet deals with the greatness of the saints or the ascetics. Then comes the glorification of righteousness called Aram. Be spotlessly pure in heart. This is Aram. All else is but vain show (34). There is a clarity of vision and a lucidity of expression in his teachings which are stimulating as well as elevating. The couplets in this part embody the result of a long and devoted study of life, and hence they are not only direct and clear but also forceful and inspiring.

Herein he speaks highly of household life and its duties. But he has not belittled the value of asceticism. In the Tirukkural, the life of the ideal householder is placed on a par with, if not superior to, that of the ascetic. The man who lives the life of a householder in the way it should be lived, takes rank with the heavenly gods (50).

Tiruvalluvar is a staunch believer in Aram, the great moral force which keeps ceaseless watch over individuals, the society and the ruler of the state and which confers on those who live in accordance with moral codes all wealth and pleasure, material and spiritual (31, 32, 39). There is no stress on the idea of reward for good deeds, though he says that moral behaviour results in earthly welfare and immoral in misfortune (211, 222).

Duty is not confined to what the caste calling involves, but consists in general in all that is virtuous and helpful to others. He is not a believer in the distinctions of caste based on birth (972). He is a reformer of a high order and he is not concerned with the various rites and rituals and the passing fashions of social behaviour. He is concerned only with the fundamental nature of human beings and the essential love to bind them in family and society. As the sun burns up the boneless worms, so does Aram deal with one devoid of love (77). To live a life without love is like a withered tree bursting into leaf in a barren land (78). What profits one's outward feature if one's heart is devoid of love? (79). That in which love dwells is the seat of life; all others are but skin-clad bones (80). Such lofty ethical sayings recall to us the teachings of Buddha and Christ and other great saviours of the world.

An ideal wife is the glory of his house (60), is modest and frugal, adores her husband, guards herself and is the guardian of the fame of the house (51, 52, 56). The householder should be courteous in speech, grateful for every kind act of others, just in all his dealings, master of himself in perfect self-control, strict in the performance of his duties, patient and forbearing, with a heart free from jealousy, moderate in desires, speaking no ill of others, avoiding back-biting, refraining from unprofitable utterances, never doing evil deeds, and always helpful and benevolent to others.

Household life, according to Tiruvalluvar, is to serve others and derive pleasure from such service (81, 212).

There are several chapters in this part which are full of teachings for humanity in general and for ascetics in particular. The moral virtue of abstaining from killing and eating meat is dealt with here. There are chapters on compassion, penance, truth, not getting angry and not stealing. With sure strokes, he draws the ideal of simple ethical humanity and his utterances are characterised by nobility and wisdom. He does not advocate any ceremonial religion and any sacrifice to God by means of material objects but his emphasis is, as in the Bhagavad-Gita, on inner religion of moral uplift based on a renunciatory spirit.

His teachings on instability of material life, renunciation, realization and freedom from

* The numbers within brackets denote the numbers of the couplets in the Tirukkural.

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desire, are of a very high order and reveal to us his sound philosophy of life. It is the worst folly to mistake the unstable for the stable (331). The detachment of the soul to the body is that of a full-fledged bird abandoning its broken shell and flying away (338). Death is like sleep, birth like awakening from it (339). One does not suffer pain from those things that one has renounced (341). Trample under your feet all the desires of the senses and renounce all that you have been longing for (343). Why talk of other attachments; even the body is an encumbrance for those aiming at salvation (345). The region greater than that of the gods is for those who shatter the feelings of 'I' and 'Mine' (346). Cling fast to Him who is free from desires; seek Him in order to free yourself from desires (350).

To men of unclouded wisdom heaven is nearer than earth (353). The perception of one's senses is of no avail if one is not endowed with true knowledge (354). If one seeks the truth which is the basis of all, one will be free from all the ills of life (359). The ills of life vanish when one's heart is rid of desire, wrath and delusion (360). There is no greater wealth than freedom from desire either here or in the world beyond (363). Purity of mind is nothing but absence of desire; it follows when one craves for truth (364). Only those who are free from the bonds of desire are free; the rest are not so free (365). Even in this world there is everlasting happiness, when desire, the evil of evils, dies out (369). If one gives up one's insatiable longings, it confers on him eternity (370).

'There hardly exists in the literature of the world a collection of maxims in which we find so much lofty wisdom', says Albert Schweitzer in his *Indian Thought and Its Development*. This applies to the second part of the Tirukkural as well as to the first part. The second part is called 'Porutpal' ('porul' meaning wealth). Though mainly intended for the statesman, his teachings are generally applicable to all the members of the society. He passes over what is peculiar to particular states, times and classes of society and introduces such ideas only as are common to all times and all classes.

Every couplet here again is a marvel of lucidity and compression, the apotheosis of beauty and force. According to the great author, Aram (righteousness) is the root of justice. Even the mighty ruler of the state, if he does wrong, will be pushed down by the weight of his iniquity. He preaches great ideals, but he brings everything down to the level of practicality without losing hold of the ideals. We find herein the combination of shrewd practical wisdom and high political principles.

He is the ruler who is capable of acquiring, preserving and wisely distributing wealth (385). He is an honourable ruler who swerves not from virtue and abstains from vice (384). He is a light among rulers who is endowed with liberality, mercy, justice and love for his subjects (390). The ruler who is not guarded by wise men of firm counsel will perish even though he has no enemies (448). Victory is not won by the weapons but by the just rule of the head of the state (546). The ruler protects the state and it is justice that protects him if unfailingly administered (547). The unrighteous ruler who oppresses his subjects is more cruel than those who indulge in murder (551). Are not the woeful tears of the oppressed, the weapons which destroy the prosperity of the oppressive ruler? (555). The people under a merciless ruler suffer like the earth devoid of the drops of rain (557). No burden is harder for the earth to bear than the cruel sceptre that attracts the unwise (570).

The present age is far remote from the age of Tiruvalluvar. Contact with other countries of the world has changed our social, economic and political life. Our notions about the values of things of life have radically changed. The industrial and scientific progress has revolutionised our manner of living. Yet this great work is still found very useful as a guide to life, individual and social alike. It is even today praised as a repertory of practical wis-

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dom dispelling darkness and diving deep into the hearts of humanity; and may be accepted as a safe guide to the prevailing theories of political administration and economic and social wellbeing.

According to Tiruvalluvar, wealth is no doubt very essential, but is not an end in itself and is required only to promote the other ends efficiently (758, 759, 760). But the means of acquiring wealth should be pure and righteous. Though wealth is capable of making even insignificant men prominent, it will confer virtue and happiness only if it is acquired justly and without sin (751, 754). Let no one accept the wealth not acquired through grace and love (755).

The third part of this work, 'Kamattuppal', is on marital love. The poetical talents of the author are best seen in this part. In the first part we find a staunch moralist preaching ideals, in the second an able statesman imparting practical wisdom and here in the third part an artist inspiring the reader with his imaginative sketches on love.

There are some, especially European missionaries, who wonder how the great author ventured to write on an erotic theme. Tiruvalluvar believes in the simple married life as the foundation of a sound moral society and finds no reason to evade the treatment of this essential part of life. Even in the treatment of this idealised earthly love there is serenity, purity and dignity. The lovers rise above all selfishness and are full of sacrifice for each other. Nammalwar, the greatest of the twelve Alwars of Vaishnavism, freely makes use of some of these couplets in his hymns of divine longings for God's grace. Such is the elevated atmosphere created in these couplets by the saintly poet Tiruvalluvar.

The immortality of this great work lies in its universal appeal transcending all times. Every noteworthy poet or philosopher who came after him, deemed it a privilege and honour to incorporate in his work the luminous ideas and lucid expressions of this author. It is praised by many great scholars of our period in India and abroad, and here are some of their cherished opinions :

Rev. Percival :

'Nothing certainly in the whole compass of human language can equal the force and terseness of the sententious distichs in which the author conveys the lesson of wisdom he utters.'

M. Arial :

'This is one of the highest and purest expressions of human thought.'

Mahatma Gandhi :

'Tiruvalluvar was a Tamil saint. He is said to have lived in the first century of the Christian era. He gave us the famous Tirukkural, holy maxims described by Tamilians as the Tamil Veda.'

V. V. S. Iyer :

'Tiruvalluvar is one of those seers whose message is intended not merely for their age or country but for all time, for all mankind. He has given to the world a work to which, in perfection of form, profundity of thought, nobleness of sentiment, and earnestness of moral purpose, very few books outside the grand scriptures of humanity can at all be compared.'

To me it is equal whether love ordain
My life or death, appoint me pain or ease.
My soul perceives no real ill in pain;
In ease or health no real good she sees;
One good she covets, and that good alone,—
To choose Thy will, from selfish bias free,
And to prefer a cottage to a throne,
And grief to comfort, if it pleases Thee.

—*Acquiescence of Pure Love* by Madame Guyon.

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DNYANESHWARI

M. V. BHIDE

Next to the Vedic religious literature, *Dnyaneshwari* (Jnāneshwari) is perhaps the holy book with the widest influence in Maharashtra. It is so called after its author Dnyaneshwar, who lived about the close of the thirteenth century of the Christian era. Before proceeding to describe the contents of the *Dnyaneshwari,* it will not be out of place to say a few words about its author, Dnyaneshwar, who was a remarkable genius, combining in himself, the gifts of a poet, a philosopher, and a Yogi (i.e. a person who had attained Yoga or communion with God). Dnyaneshwar was born in a family with a long religious tradition, his great-grandfather and grandfather being followers of the Nath sect, a well-known sect of Yogis of the time. His father Vithalpant was a devotee of the God Vithoba of the famous shrine at Pandharpur in Maharashtra. He was of an ascetic turn of mind. Though married at an early age, his heart was not in the affairs of this world and he decided to renounce the world. He left his home and going to Varanasi, was initiated there in the ascetic order of 'Sannyasis'. According to the rule of that order, it was necessary for Vithalpant to obtain the permission of his wife to become a Sannyasi. He had not done so and had not disclosed the fact that he was married to the Guru who initiated him. It so happened that this Guru happened to visit later on the village of Vithalpant and there came to know from his wife Rakhmabai, that he was married and had not obtained her permission to renounce the world. On learning this, the Guru was greatly displeased and on his return to Varanasi took Vithalpant to task and ordered him to go back to his village and live with his wife. Vithalpant had to obey the order and returning to his village, began to live with his wife. Four children were then born to him viz. Nivritti, Dnyanadev (who came to be known later as 'Dnyaneshwar' and we shall refer to him herein by that name), Sopandev, and Muktabai. The orthodox priests of the locality, however, looked upon these children as illegitimate and refused the sacraments of the Hindu religion to them. Although Vithalpant had returned to the householder's life in obedience to the order of his Guru, who had treated his 'Sannyas' as null and void, the orthodox priests refused to recognise the children as legitimate, as in their view, once a man had renounced the world and been initiated into the 'Sannyasi' order, he could, under no circumstances return to married life. The result was that Vithalpant and his family were treated as outcastes and had to live in great distress. Vithalpant, however, being a great pandit, educated his children himself and all of them, being very intelligent, made rapid progress and became well-versed in Hindu religious lore. Nivritti, the eldest son, was initiated into the Nath Sect at an early age and became an adept. He, in his turn, initiated his younger brother Dnyaneshwar into the sect and Dnyaneshwar too attained proficiency in the practice of Yoga. Dnyaneshwar then conceived the idea of writing a commentary in the Marathi language on the Bhagavadgita, which is looked upon as embodying the quintessence of the Hindu religion. All the sacred literature of the Hindus was then in Sanskrit, which had now become quite unintelligible to the masses. The object of Dnyaneshwar, in writing a commentary on the Bhagavadgita in Marathi, was to make the essential teaching of the Hindu religion accessible and easily intelligible to the masses. It was a bold and difficult enterprise. No one had yet ventured to undertake such a task, as it was considered a sacrilege by the orthodox priests to translate the sacred Vedic literature into the vernacular languages. Dnyaneshwar, however, undertook the task, in spite of the opposition of the priests, under the

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guidance of his elder brother and Guru Nivrittinath and carried it out successfully. He began to preach the Dnyaneshwari to the public and so great was the impression produced by his learning and eloquence as well as the lucidity of his exposition of the Gita that large audiences began to gather to listen to him and he earned their respect and admiration. Eventually even the priests became impressed by the great learning and high character of Dnyaneshwar and were persuaded to withdraw the ban of excommunication, which they had imposed on the family!

'Dnyaneshwari' purports to be a commentary on the Bhagavadgita; but it is not merely a word for word interpretation of the verses of the Gita as commentaries usually are. It is called *Bhavartha-Dipika* (Light on the meaning of the Gita) and aims at the elucidation of the true import and implications of the teaching of the Gita. It, therefore, explains the meaning of the verses, with copious illustrations, so as to make it easily intelligible even to the uneducated masses. The commentary is in the form of rhythmic verses called 'ovi's, which can be sung and are attractive to the ear. There is also a good deal of extraneous matter in the form of prayers addressed to deities and the Guru, references to legends and anecdotes from the Puranas and so forth. Dnyaneshwar, though young, had a remarkable knowledge of the world and knew how to bring home the meaning of the verses of the Gita to the reader or listener with apt illustrations from ordinary life. The result is that the *Dnyaneshwari* has become a voluminous work. While the original Bhagavadgita consists of only seven hundred verses, the number of 'ovis' in the *Dnyaneshwari* is over nine thousand and its preaching in the temples takes months or even years, according to the time which can be devoted to it daily!

Dnyaneshwari is one of the earliest and greatest works in the Marathi language. Its author, Dnyaneshwar, had a wonderful command over the language and he was conscious of it. He was confident of being able to make even the philosophical subject-matter of the Gita intelligible to the layman through the medium of that language, though the task had never been attempted by anyone before him. He says that he will make the 'Marathi' language rival even the nectar in sweetness and bring the high teaching of Brahma-vidya in the Gita within its homely precincts! No one who reads the *Dnyaneshwari* will think that this proud claim of the author was not justified. Dnyaneshwar had a rich vocabulary and had besides the knack of expressing his meaning in terse, forceful and expressive words. As Dnyaneshwar was a great Sanskrit scholar, he was also able to adopt suitable words from that language for the purposes of his commentary. It does not, however, contain many foreign words, as Muslim influence had not reached South India by the time of Dnyaneshwar. Its language is thus typical of the Marathi language in its earliest and purest form now available. The *Dnyaneshwari* has therefore become the most important of the earliest works in the Marathi language and is known as 'Grantharaj' or the 'King of Books'!

Besides being a master of the Marathi language, Dnyaneshwar was also a gifted poet. The subject-matter of the Gita, being of a philosophical nature, can hardly be considered to be suited to poetry. But Dnyaneshwar has performed the remarkable feat of enriching his exposition of the philosophical subject with poetical embellishments! He had a fertile imagination and he has illuminated his interpretation of the Gita, with a surpassing wealth of similes, metaphors and so on. These similes seem to flow at times in rapid succession, each surpassing its predecessor in its beauty. *Dnyaneshwari* is full of such poetical embellishments. The following will serve as a specimen. When Arjun, the great Pandava hero, was overtaken by a mood of dejection on the eve of the great war with the Kauravas at the thought of killing his own kinsmen, who though his enemies at the time included many of his dear and revered elders and preceptor, Shri Krishna, his guide, philosopher and friend, whose advice he had sought, took him to task

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for exhibition of such imbecility on the occasion and pointed out that this was wholly unbecoming in a great warrior. He says : 'On seeing you in such a mood, it appears to me as though the sun is being overcome by darkness, or the wind defeated by the clouds, or the fire, devoured by firewood, or the alligator swallowed by the frog or the lion subdued by the jackal, or the immortal nectar itself succumbing to death. Indeed the impossible seems to have become possible.'

The Bhagavadgita is a philosophical poem and purports to teach the goal of human life and the ways to attain it. It is put in the form of a dialogue between Arjun the disciple and Shri Krishna the teacher, who is an incarnation of God. As Arjun put questions to remove his doubts from time to time, Shri Krishna had the opportunity to explain difficult points, so as to make the subject easily intelligible. Dnyaneshwar has in his commentary amplified these explanations with further illustrations so as to make the subject still simpler. Sometimes some fifty or more 'ovis' are devoted to the elucidation of a single verse of the Gita!

According to the Gita, the world is a manifestation of the Supreme Being, or Brahman. The human being or Jivatma is a part of that Supreme Being and his goal is union (Yoga) with the Brahman. The Gita is accordingly called Brahma-vidya or the Science of Brahman as well as Yogashastra or the art of achieving Yoga or union with Brahman. Dnyaneshwar in writing his commentary had to expound this philosophy of the Gita. But some of the earlier famous commentators on the Gita such as Sankara and Ramanuja had placed different interpretations on that philosophy. Dnyaneshwar has said that in writing his commentary he had taken guidance from the earlier commentators (Bhashyakaras), but he has not named any of them and the question has arisen whether he was a follower of Sankara or Ramanuja. Critics have differed on the point, but the generally accepted view is that he has accepted the 'Advaita' (monistic) interpretation of Sankara. This view receives support from the fact that Dnyaneshwar in his independent philosophical work named *Amritanubhava* (experience of the immortal) has taught 'Advaita' or Monism. It may, however, be added that in the *Dnyaneshwari,* Dnyaneshwar has not merely followed Sankara but has not hesitated to take an independent view on certain points.

According to the Gita, there are different ways of achieving the goal of human life viz. 'Dnyanamarga' (Path of knowledge), 'Karma-marga' (Path of action), and 'Bhakti-marga' (Path of devotion). Gita teaches the last as the easiest and best for the ordinary layman and this is also the view emphasized by Dnyaneshwar in his commentary. This seems to be the reason why the *Dnyaneshwari* became popular with the worshippers of the Deity, Vithoba of Pandharpur, who are followers of the Bhakti-marga or the Path of devotion and came to be accepted by them as their Gospel or principal Holy Book.

Besides being a philosopher, Dnyaneshwar was also a Yogi. It has been already mentioned that Dnyaneshwar had been initiated into the Nath Panth at an early age. The followers of the Nath Sect were devoted to the study and practice of Yoga, and Dnyaneshwar had become proficient in the 'Yoga' and realized union with the Supreme Being in 'Samadhi' which is the final stage in Yoga. The sixth chapter of the Gita deals very briefly with 'Dhyanayoga' or the method of attaining union with the Supreme Being by concentration of the mind. But in his commentary on this chapter, Dnyaneshwar goes into the subject in minute detail, which shows that he was well acquainted with the various stages of Yoga, leading up to Samadhi and had practised it himself. The practice of Yoga is said to confer various supernatural powers on the person who has attained success in it and Dnyaneshwar is said to have performed various miracles, which greatly added to his prestige and influence. In the sixth chapter of the Gita, it is stated that a Yogi experiences in the state of Samadhi, supreme bliss which has no parallel in the pleasures of the senses and he ceases to care for this world. Such was

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the great fascination which Yoga had for Dnyaneshwar, that after completing his monumental work of the compilation of *Dnyaneshwari* and the *Amritanubhava,* Dnyaneshwar is said to have voluntarily ended his life in Samadhi at the early age of about 22, in the presence of a large gathering at Alandi, near Poona. At the place, where Dnyaneshwar thus brought his life to an end, a temple was built and dedicated to him and thousands of pilgrims visit it to pay their respectful homage to him.

The fact that Dnyaneshwar was himself a Yogi and had realized union with the supreme being, has greatly added to the popularity and wide influence of the Dnyaneshwari and this was, no doubt, one of the reasons for its being accepted as their principal Holy Book, by the followers of the Warkari Panth in Maharashtra. For centuries, the Dnyaneshwari has been expounded by religious teachers in temples and listened to respectfully by large devout congregations all over that province. Dnyaneshwar is called 'Mauli' or the Mother by his followers, in respectful affection. On the occasion of the great annual fair, which is held in the month of Ashadha in honour of the God Vithoba at Pandharpur, a copy of the *Dnyaneshwari* is placed in a palanquin and taken in procession from Alandi to Pandharpur, and the Warkaris go on foot with it, dancing, and chanting his songs to the accompaniment of cymbals and drums. The procession halts on the way at various places and is joined by thousands of devotees from all over Maharashtra.

DASABODHA

SWAMI PARATPARANANDA

Dāsabodha is one of the important works of Sri Samartha Ramadasa, a saint of Maharashtra and the spiritual teacher of Shivaji. Among his remaining works the notable ones are *Karunashtaken, Manache Sloka* and *Janasvabhavagosanvi.* Samartha Ramadasa is held in high respect and his name is taken with awe even now. It is traditionally believed that he had a great hand in the building of the Maharatta empire under Shivaji. Under his guidance and inspiration Shivaji faced many a hazardous task with fortitude and presence of mind which qualities of head and heart in him stand as burning examples in the annals of history. When more than once Shivaji wanted to lay down the office of rulership and retire to live as a simple disciple of Ramadasa, the latter commanded that he should fight and firmly establish the kingdom and that, that was the discipline he prescribed for Shivaji's spiritual welfare. India to-day knows fully well how timely and valuable was this advice. Some portions of this book contain this advice given to Shivaji. (xviii. 6.)

The life of Samartha Ramadasa is wonderful. As a boy of twelve he developed great dispassion for the world and ran away from the house as the guardians were trying to bind him to the world by way of wedlock. The next twelve years of his life were spent in tapasya at a place called Tākali. Not much is known about his struggles and trials about this period nor about the succeeding twelve years which he spent in visiting places of pilgrimage throughout the length and breadth of the country. After this great wandering he came and settled on the banks of the Krishna. Three years later Ramadasa obtained an image of Sri Rama from the deep places of the Krishna river at Angāpur and a year later consecrated a temple to Sri Rama at Chaphala and worshipped Him. It was after this that he came in contact with Shivaji and events moved on rapidly culminating not only in the

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establishment of a strong embankment in the form of the Maharatta kingdom to resist the fanatical furies of the Mughal emperors but also in the wide spiritual ministry of Ramadasa.

Ramadasa was an Advaitin in outlook but that did not blind him to the realities of the world. He was fully conscious of the degradation of the people especially the Brahmins who had fallen from the ideal and were taking to occupations not fitting with the purity and spirituality of a Brahmin. His patience seems, however, to have been lost when the so-called wise of the race voluntarily embraced other religions. (xiv. 7. 29-40.) It was in order to revive the ancient religion therefore that he dedicated the rest of his life.

The *Dasabodha* consists of twenty sections. Each section is termed a dasaka as it contains ten chapters, called samasas. The whole book is written in the form of prose-verse but it never becomes commonplace. The similes are homely yet forceful, the language is simple and the style terse. It is a treatise on the Advaita Vedanta in the Marathi language and is widely read. His life was a shining example of the truths of Vedanta, for years he did not have a roof for shelter and even when he had he seemed to have rarely made use of it. Utterly dependent on the Lord, and the welfare of the people always at heart he roamed from place to place to provide guidance and infuse discrimination in them about the values of life. He deals with a wide range of subjects on the spiritual life : true and false knowledge, necessity of a Guru, characteristics of a Guru, the qualifications of a true disciple, Maya, necessity of spiritual disciplines, bhakti and liberation.

He extols the value of the human body in as much as it forms the vehicle for the liberation of the soul from transmigration. Man can make or mar his own fate ; by the human body alone many have become rishis, munis and attained God-realisation through different paths. But, says Ramadasa, all this is possible when the body is strong, free from disease and deformities ; so when yet the body is strong it should be utilised in the service of God. The animals cannot aspire for liberation because they have not the sense of the values of life ; all their energy is consumed in self-preservation and satisfaction of their instincts which are not high.

Dasabodha stresses the importance of cultivation of virtuous habits for one who aspires for liberation ; this section of the book gives a piece of worldly advice too which cannot be followed but with profit both in one's spiritual and secular life. 'One who takes pleasure in self-aggrandisement, one who undertakes to do a work beyond his capacity, one who has neither learning nor wealth but still remains proud, one who earns wealth by foul means are all ignorant,' says Ramadasa. These along with other drawbacks which he enumerates should be given up and the positive helpful qualities are to be assiduously cultivated, by a seeker of a higher life is the contention of Ramadasa, in short without a good grounding in moral life, spiritual life is an impossibility is his view.

Following the Rishis of old he draws a sharp line of demarcation between what real knowledge is, and what is considered normally as knowledge. The difference between the two is that the former liberates man whereas the latter binds him to this world more and more. The knowledge of the different sciences and dexterity in using that knowledge to fulfil our worldly ambitions is not real knowledge, it only whets our desire to excel in worldly goods. As against this is posited the knowledge of the Atman, the Ever-Eternal Substance, the Indwelling Spirit in all, which destroys ignorance and makes man omniscient. And this is not to be attained by mere study of the Vedas but by the grace of a Guru.

Ramadasa is never tired of stressing the necessity of a Guru and his grace for the realisation of God. Many of the chapters of this book are exclusively devoted to impress this idea on the mind of the readers and whenever he speaks of Brahman and realisation he puts this idea in the forefront. So definite is he

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about the efficacy of the Guru's grace that he holds it more covetable than the knowledge of all the Vedas and Vedanta, when he says :

> 'I know neither Sanskrit nor Prakrit but by the grace of my Guru I can dispense with the study of the Vedas and all kinds of learning.' (v. 6. 33-42.)

The question that troubles a young mind seems to be, 'Why one should give up the comforts of the world which are here and now and to aspire after something which is unknown and indefinite ?' Ramadasa gives the reply to this. True, that this seems to be real but why not look around and see where the so-called youth, beauty and vigour, the wealth and the people whom we loved have gone. If they were real why should they disappear, if they are unreal then why take birth, which is fraught with danger, with trials, with trepidations and again with the deadly death. Man should therefore try to avoid this cycle of birth and death by realising the nature of his own Self. Nothing else, says Ramadasa, can free you from this bondage.

Again to cut at the root of the argument that what is perceived by the senses is more tangible than anything else, Ramadasa brings in the experience of a man in the desert who runs after the water in the mirage, the example of the man who obtained wealth in his dreams, and the magic world of the magician. If the senses were infallible in their judgement why does man see water where it is not, see wealth where it is absent, see a whole world of impossibilities. If then the senses cannot be depended upon fully, how can it be judged which of its experiences are true and which false ; as the wealth which was real during the dream stage has no reality during the waking stage, all this that we see have only a temporary existence ; refuse to have anything to do with it and think of the One reality, the Atman.

Whence this illusion is the question that engages the mind ! It is because the unreal and the real have got mixed up like milk and water that we see everything as real and it requires intuition like the instinct of the proverbial swan to separate the two, to reject the unreal and to accept the real. The unreal shines as real because of the substratum on which it is projected is real. Leaving out the unreal one should attain the real and that real is One, without a second and that is one's own Self. How is this to be done ? By belief in the words of the Guru, by hearing constantly about God, by devotion to God and finally by self surrender, says Ramadasa.

Dasabodha deals also with the question of the necessity of 'upasana', worship and 'Kirtan'. It is not fair for one who has not gone beyond the body idea to ask this question. It is true that everything is illusion but until you have experienced it yourself you have to do worship, do upasana, do kirtan and in every other way remember God. Otherwise you will worship your own body more, your own patrons in worldly goods you will like to propitiate more and get entangled the more in the world. If you can do any act for the sake of keeping this body why should you only neglect your worship of God, who is the patron of your patrons, nay the life of your life. Even by taking recourse to this saguna aspect of Brahman you can reach the Nirguna Brahman. Ramadasa though a staunch Advaitin worshipped Sri Rama and felt proud in calling himself His servant. Bhakti according to him is not antagonistic to the path of Advaita, self-surrender is not degradation but an elevation of the mind to the level of the Atman by forgetting the body and even the ego.

Sravana, hearing, plays a very important part in our spiritual lives, says Ramadasa. Sravana should be constantly adhered to. By sravana the attraction for worldly objects gets feebled, discrimination awakens, infatuation disappears and love of God sprouts forth. Without hearing about God we cannot understand and this hearing should be through the lips of a proper person. That person is the Guru who will instruct the disciple according to his temperament and tendencies. Everything in its place is sweet ; one who likes the worship of God with form should not be asked to cultivate devotion to His formless aspect,

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neither one who takes naturally to the formless aspect be forced to go through the disciplines of the saguna aspect.

The idea that meditation is imagination seems to have been prevalent even during those days and Ramadasa faces this accusation boldly and says, 'The world itself is an imagination and out of this world you get only disillusionment at the end, then why not try better imagination? Imagine about God, about Brahman; by thinking constantly good thoughts, bad thoughts vanish from the mind, similarly by thinking about God this world will glide away giving place to the mightiest power, God.'

Ramadasa, however, says that without attaining Brahman, without knowing one's own Nature, it is futile to think that one would get liberation. Brahman is all that exists, all the variety that we see is only due to Maya. Brahman cannot be compared, yet if we have to illustrate we can say it is like the *ākāsha,* all-pervading but there the comparison ends for the akasha is created and destructible whereas Brahman always exists. It is the Only Reality in which all gods, even Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara are born. It is very near us and at the same time very far. In this way he goes on to give illustrations most of which we come across in the Upanishads and the Gita.

Dasabodha, therefore, is in short, a compendium of the truths of Vedanta which carries behind it the weight of the supreme realisations of the author. Being written in the language of the people it has been a tremendous force in the revival of the *Ancient Religion.* The need of such a work at that time was possibly intensely felt as the Brahmins had deprived the other castes from having access to the Vedas and its necessity still continues as the zeal for learning Sanskrit has died out in the country. As it has a direct appeal to the mind and also a direct method of approach to the subject, it deserves to be more widely read than afore by those who place the spiritual life on a higher pedestal than the normal life. May Sri Rama who guided Ramadasa lead us to right understanding.

SHRI CHAITANYA CHARITAMRITAM

SATCHIDANANDA DHAR

(*a*) *Shri Chaitanya — The Incarnation of Lord Shri Krishna.* To the Gaudia Vaishnavas Shri Chaitanya is the Incarnation of Lord Krishna. According to *Chaitanya Bhagavat* Lord Krishna, the son of Nanda, incarnated himself as Shri Chaitanya at Nabadwip. So in the scripture :

'Nanda suta bali jare Bhagavate gai.
Shri Krishna avatirna Chaitanya gosain'
(vide : *Chaitanya Charitamrita.*
Adilila, 2nd chapter.)

That Krishna, who is sung in the Bhagavata as the son of Nanda, alighted as Chaitanya Gosain.

Not to speak of the Gaudia Vaishnavas, the Hindu devotees in general, worship Shri Chaitanya as a perfect Incarnation of Lord Shri Krishna. Shri Chaitanya is the embodiment of bhakti cult (devotional religion). It is through the influence of his godly life that the devotional religion has taken new shape in Northern India.

(*b*) *The influence of the Life of Shri Chaitanya on Literature and Society.* The Holy life of Shri Chaitanya cast a unique influence on the literature and society of Bengal. This influence was not limited to Bengal alone. He passed long eighteen years of his life in Shri-Kshetra (or Puri in Orissa) and with his group of followers visited the holy places of Northern India and preached the bhakti cult.

The sacred places of Vrindavan and Mathura

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were renovated by him and by his commissioned and favoured gosains. While at Puri he exchanged his views with many devotees and seers of India. His tour of the Deccan and the discourses on bhakti that he held with the devotees of the South, are very important events. It was in the Deccan that perfect bhakti cult was manifested and widely spread.

The results which the master derived from his visits to the holy places of devotional worship and the shrines and also from the religious discourses with the devotees and the learned, he added to his own sadhana.

In later days, he preached this philosophy of bhakti to his disciples and followers. Lord Chaitanya is indeed the pioneer in unifying the Northern and Southern India by the thread of bhakti cult in a new method.

The life and teaching of Shri Chaitanya has a unique influence upon the Bengali literature. Though Shri Chaitanya is an Incarnation, the man in him was not overshadowed at Nabadwip and Nilachal by his divine and superhuman character. In the biography branch of the Literature and in the Lyrics of the Padavali (Lyrics of the Vaishnava songs), Shri Chaitanya has been described purely as a man mad with divine ecstasy. Shri Ramachandra, the hero of the Ramayana, though an Incarnation of God, was to Valmiki only 'a moon among men' (Naracandramas). Likewise Shri Chaitanya became the premier hero and First perfect man in Bengali literature. In this way the Biographical Literature and the Lyrics of Bengali literature also received an eternal ideal man as hero after a long time. There are rare examples of an ideal man in the Bengali literature and lyric before the advent of Shri Chaitanya. He remains the only ideal hero of a perfect biography which had long been a desideratum in Bengali literature.

(*c*) *The Biography of Shri Chaitanya and his circle.* Innumerable works have been written in Sanskrit and Bengali about Shri Chaitanya and his disciples. These treatises combine Literature, History and Philosophy in one. The divinity of Shri Chaitanya and his devotees has been dwelt upon in these works. By the way the then social condition and personal character of some people are also described. Above all the cult of bhakti and its philosophical significance has been analysed. The Gaudia Vaishnava devotees and those who are seekers of truth, consider any line of these works as conclusive and authentic. They prove their own statements to be incontrovertible and free from error by quoting from these works.

Amongst the biographies of Shri Chaitanya the best known are: (1) *Shri Chaitanya Charitāmrita* by Krishnadas Kaviraj, (2) *The Chaitanya Bhagavata* by Vrindavan Das, (3) *The Chaitanya Mangal* by Lochan Das, (4) *The Chaitanya Mangal* by Jogananda, and (5) *Karchā* of Govinda Das.

Besides these works there are many other books wherein the career of Shri Chaitanya, the biographies of his devotees and followers, the history of the Vaishnava Society and the philosophy of bhakti have been elaborately dealt with. In addition to this there are innumerable Vaishnava lyrics wherein songs in praise of the Master and his disciples have been profusely included which are known as the 'Gaurachandrikas'. They are those songs relating to Chaitanya which are to be sung compulsorily as a prelude to 'Namasankirtana' (singing of Lord's name by repetition). In Bengal 'Harisankirtana' or any religious discourse on Hari, without Gaurachandrika is not permissible, and hence is not valid. For Gauranga is the embodied incarnation of Shri Krishna. It is through him that the sweetness of His activities (Lila) will have to be appreciated.

(*d*) *Shri Chaitanya Charitamrita — The Gita of the Gaudia Vaishnavites.* Like the Gita, Shri Chaitanya Charitamrita is the religious scripture of Bengal. For Shri Chaitanya is the Shri Krishna of Bengal. Here not only the Vaishnava devotees but the Hindus in general and even a section of the Muslim devotees worship Gauranga as the incarnation of Lord Krishna and also adore him with all reverence as the embodiment of devotional religion. In the poem, Shri Chaitanya Charitamrita, the life history of Shri Chaitanya and

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the philosophy of the Gaudia Vaishnavas have been well explained. The poet of this lyric, Krishna Das Kaviraj was vastly learned in all the Sastras, a great seer and a Vaishnava devotee of a very high order. Though bent with years, yet being advised and directed by the six Goswamis of Vrindavan, he undertook the sacred task of writing this great book. He presented the life story of Shri Chaitanya illuminated in the light of the ancient Sastras. He also established the truth of his own propositions citing the authority of the scriptures. The date of this work is 1560-1580 A.D.

(*e*) *The necessity of Shri Chaitanya's advent.* At the outset Krishnadas Kaviraj has stated the reasons of Shri Chaitanya's advent in this mortal world as an incarnation of Lord Krishna. The Masters Shri Gauranga and Shri Nityananda are Shri Krishna and Balaram personified. They very kindly came down to this mortal world and appeared in Gauda (Bengal) to dispel the darkness of ignorance in human beings and eradicating their sins by preaching a religion of devotion. So run the saying :

> Krishna and Balaram who resided in Brajadham and whose abode was illuminated by the rays of crores of suns and moons graciously incarnated themselves on this earth and appeared in the eastern part of Bengal. They are Shri Krishna Chaitanya and Master Nityananda. Their manifestation filled this earth with joy. As the sun and the moon dispel all the darkness they began to dispel ignorance by preaching religion.—*Chaitanya Charitamrita,* Adilila.

It is also depicted in the Sastras how Shri Chaitanya and Shri Nityananda will dispel the darkness of ignorance of this world. It is also mentioned that these two incarnated personages (Avatars) will introduce a new era in religion, suitable to the time, by preaching 'Nama Sankirtana', an easy method of Bhakti and will explain what real devotion is :

> 'I shall introduce a time-befitting religion by preaching "Nama Sankirtana" and shall fill the earth with joy by preaching bhakti in four ways; myself shall I practice the ways of devotion and then showing my own life, I shall teach religion of devotion to others. It is said in the Gita and in the Bhagavata that no one can teach religion to others unless he practises it himself.'

The primary necessity of the advent of Shri Chaitanya was to teach the Yuga Dharma by assuming himself the role of a bhakta and practising the teachings.

According to the author of Chaitanya Charitamrita the bestowal of bhakti through the four methods, viz. shānta (sublimity), dāsya (through service), sakhya (as a friend), vatsalya (through affection) is not the great factor. Any Incarnation could teach bhakti to others by these four methods. But the most difficult task lies in preaching and teaching devotional religion in the method of sweet love that was displayed by Radha in Brajalila. It is said that Shri Chaitanya, the perfect Incarnation and embodiment of Lord Krishna will this time teach devotional worship by the method of sweet love, as between the lover and the beloved. Here the Master says :

> The religion of the age is possible to be introduced by a person of partial incarnation. But without myself (the perfect incarnation) nobody can preach Braja-prema (the sweet love of the Gopis in Braja).

The secrets of this Braja-prema has been in particular discussed in Chaitanya Charitamrita. The secret of sādhya (aim) and sādhana (means) of the Gaudia Vaishnavas have been very beautifully expressed through the conversation of Shri Chaitanya and Rai Ramananda. It is for the spread of 'Namadharma' (worshipping God by repetition of his name) in Kali-yuga and to manifest the sweetness of Braja-prem that the advent of Shri Chaitanya was a necessity.

(*f*) *Shri Chaitanya — Incarnation of Radha and Krishna combined.* It is very difficult to realise the doctrine of love of Radha and Krishna. With the least sense of lust it is impossible to realise it, yet the ultimate aim of the Bhakti cult is to taste the ways of God through sweetness of love. The common people having the least sense of lust can hardly appreciate the spiritual significance lying in the midst of Union and Separation of Radha and Krishna at Braja. So Shri Gauranga has des-

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cended on this earth bearing the sentiments of both Radha and Krishna in the same body. Being inspired by the emotional frenzy of Radha he was at times found to be mad on the separation of Krishna and also at other times was found to be love-sick for Radha being inspired by the thought that he was Krishna personified. Again he was found to be immersed in celestial joy after enjoying the divine pleasure of the sweet touch of the sentiments of Radha and Krishna at the same time in his own body. Thus he showed to the mankind the real significance of the Love of Brajadham after himself tasting and enjoying the celestial sweetness of love. So goes the saying in the Chaitanya Charitamrita :

> Radha and Krishna were one soul but took two separate bodies. They tasted the joy with each other. Those two personages have been united in Shri Chaitanya Gosain. They have become united to enjoy the pleasure of love and its display. Radha and Krishna are the same. They take two bodily forms only to taste the joy of love's display.

Again the Charitamrita says :

> In order to preach sweetness of love and devotion, Lord Shri Krishna Chaitanya alighted on this earth after taking the form of a human being inspired by the love of Radha.

(*g*) *Shri Chaitanya — the Man.* Though Shri Chaitanya is regarded as the perfect Incarnation of God, the manifestation of human nature in him is more predominant than his godliness and supernatural attributes. He has come nearer to us by his human nature. In his childhood, he was very restless and uncontrollable well known to us as Nimai, who was fond of joke, expert in debate, desirous of victory and proud of his scholarship. He travelled to eastern Bengal to win over the pandits of that place and earned a lot of wealth and fame by dint of his scholarship. He selected his own bride of his first marriage and his second marriage was celebrated with great pomp and eclat. He was dutiful towards his mother and wife as well. He embraced sanyasa with the permission of his mother and resided at Puri with her permission. He enquired about her to the last.

He paid much heed to adverse criticism of the pubic, as also the prevailing rites and customs. He would with all humility express his voice of protest if anybody praised him to be Lord Krishna personified. He would serve the Vaishnavas and the devotees and also showed respect to the aged persons. On the other hand, he had a strict eye not to deviate from the ideal of Sanyasa. He showed respect to respectable personages and as a mark of humbleness learnt the bhakti cult from Rai Ramananda. Strictly self-restrained as he was, he avoided association with women and advised his followers to keep themselves completely aloof from their company. He never granted audience to Madhavi though she was an old and much devoted lady. He gave up his favourite disciple Haridas for ever as he accepted alms from this old Madhavi.

Gauranga is therefore, rightly considered to be a perfect man judging from his devotion to duty, affectionate temperament, sense of humour, vast learning, staunch adherence to the strict principles of sanyasa, obedience to his preceptor and also his power of organisation in securing his followers. The fact that he is an Incarnation of God may be a question of proof but the perfection of human nature in him is fully manifested. This perfection in him as a man has made his godliness more sublime.

(*h*) *The Chaitanya Charitamrita — the essence of the Gaudia Vaishnava religion.* The easy method of worshipping God by shanta, dasya and such other methods have been narrated in the Vaishnava shastras. But the main and sacred necessity of Chaitanya's Incarnation, is to teach the sadhana of Braja-prema and madhura bhava. In this worship of madhura bhava the ideas of shanta, dasya etc. are included. The first idea is present in the second but in the method of love all the methods and ideas are prevalent. Very few of the devotees are acquainted with worship in the way of kanta bhava (considering God as husband), which is also termed as madhura bhava and Braja bhava of the Gopis in Braja-

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dham. Chaitanya Deva has mentioned the name of Rai Ramananda as an appreciator and exponent of this love-religion.

In Gokula there is attachment of love and no sense of Lordship.

The sense of superiority, pomp and grandeur keep aloof the devotee from his Lord. In Braja bhava the devotee can have complete union with his Lord and be fully merged in him, with his body and soul.

This is the ultimate aim of the Gaudia Vaishnavas to establish relation with God in madhura bhava as adopted by the Braja Gopis and that by gradual process of shanta, dasya, etc. Rai Ramnanda, although a householder, acquired the highest stage of this method of worship (Braja prema). In the life of Shri Chaitanya this Braja bhava has been fully manifested.

According to *Chaitanya Charitamrita,* Radha and Sri Chaitanya who is inspired by the attributes of Radha, are the only recognised personages having right to enjoy 'Kevala rati' (unending celestial enjoyment with the Lord). The secret of this devotional worship based on the sweetness of love has been nicely expressed through the conversation of Shri Chaitanya and Rai Ramananda on this subject.

Being questioned by the Lord to describe the manner of worship in this line Ramananda replied gradually : 'Practising one's own religion, dedication of Krishna to Krishna, devotion to one's own religion, devotion with knowledge and devotion without learning.' But each time the Master opined : '*Eha bāhya, āge kaha ār*' (These are only externals, do tell me of more intimate stages). Then Ramananda said : 'Devotion with love is the essence of all religion.' On it the master commented, 'This may be acceptable but please tell me more.' Then Ramananda narrated the process of worship by dasya, sakhya, vatsalya premas, on which the master opined, 'These are excellent no doubt but pray tell me further.'

At last Ramananda said that kāntā prema (conjugal love without the least sense of sensuousness) is the best and highest form of worship.

Thus the Gaudia Vaishnavas consider the worship of God through kanta prema as their ultimate way of offering devotion to God.

(*i*) *Shri Chaitanya — the embodiment of Bhakti-cult.* In southern India practising devotion through the process of shanta, dasya etc. has been predominant for a long time. But the influence of Lord Chaitanya is evident in Bengal as well as in Northern India as a great preacher and practitioner of Vrindavan Lila of Radha and Krishna. It cannot altogether be denied that the Master during his travel in the Deccan was much impressed by the religious discourses with the devotees and philosophers of Southern India. Thus through the medium of Bhakti cult, as apostled by Lord Chaitanya, a union of thoughts between Northern and Southern India became possible.

And it can be said without the least hesitation that Sri Chaitanya may truly be regarded as the pioneer in establishing the doctrine of devotion through sweetness of love free from desire.

As two pieces of wood floating on the sea meet together at one time and are again separated, so is the union of (living) creatures in this world. Sons, grandsons, kinsmen, relatives, are all of this nature. One should never feel attachment for them, for separation from them is inevitable. Grief is the child of the dis ase created by desire. Happiness again comes when the disease of desire is cured. From joy originates sorrow, and sorrow comes again and again. The body is the abode of both sorrow and happiness. Men of impure souls attached to worldly objects by various fetters disappear like embankments of sand in water. Miseries of various sorts begotten by ignorance, act like pressers of oil-seeds, attacking all creatures for their attachments ; these press them like oil-seeds in the mill, subjecting them to the rounds of re-births. They whose understandings are dormant, and they who have that state of the mind which lies beyond the range of the intellect, succeed in enjoying happiness.

—*Mahabharata,* Shanti Parva.

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POTANA'S BHAGAVATAM

N. S. KRISHNA MURTHY

Bammera Pota Raju or Potana lent himself as a vehicle for the expression of the glorious and transcendental concepts to manifest them in literary and poetic *muse*.

> 'Bhagavata articulates. Its speaker is Rama the Saviour-protector. It is said that voicing through me, it annihilates the *mundaniana*. So I shall utter only the devotees'-theses; why extempore on other tales?'[1]

He is deeply averse to arrogate to himself any authorship of the contents. The theses on devotees are the traditional parabolic allegories that eternally sustain themselves in the memories of mankind. He remains grateful to his forbears for earmarking an opportunity in his favour to render this saga of devotees into Telugu.[2] No Telugu house exists without knowing a verse of Potana or a Krti of Tyagaraja — the musician-saint of recent times. No Telugu teenager begins his or her diurnal studies without reciting a couple of invocatory verses of Potana.

Devotionalism is implicit in his work. Parabolic exposition is explicit in his narration. The science of language and grammar are of secondary importance to him in his supreme scheme. The literary expression is chosen only by the way to express devout feelings and psychic ecstasy.

> Even the mispronounced words when they are in praise of the Lord Hari, do ward off all the sins. All ascetics, goodmen, think of the Lord, pray to Him, listen to His deeds and always utter paeans and they accomplish the ultimate. (So ponder over, O, you great one).[3]

This may be an apology. But it is an expression of sublime faith and a great caution to the secular critics. Then begins the composition of the Great Holy Book — *Bhagavata*. Its prophetic guaranty is:

> Even if one abandons his own birth-right-duties, but in utter devotion prays at the lotus feet of the Lord and dies before their fruition, it is assured that he carries over the good effects into the next birth till their full attainment. Otherwise if one swerves away from the *good* he can never accomplish the fruits of the canons of good conduct.[4]

And also

> The reading of thousands of vedic lore cannot bestow the good and auspicious fruit; but the study of *Bhagavata* (the fifth veda) does really grace the reader with salvation.[5]

He asserts that the *Bhagavata* is the Greatest Work.

The Bhagavata narration begins as a sequel to Mahabharata Epic. Aswatthama's nefarious, cruel and most unchivalrous act of infanticide provoked Arjuna and Bhima. When the murderer that pitilessly committed the nocturnal carnage was brought as a helpless captive before the bereaved and wronged mother, Draupadi, she in magnanimous equipoise of feelings pardoned him and said words in humility but with gruelling purport. The verses of Potana immortalise him and also the high character of the Queen of the Pandavas. The noble queen kept up her tranquillity and prevented a disaster to the captive. She recalled to her memory the severe and acute agony of maternal distress. Thus begins the majestic flow of narration of the string of tales in this work.

The eligibility to receive the initiation into the cult of *the way* of Devotionalism is acquired by acquainting with the saga of Devotees, i.e. *Bhagavata*. Next step is the onward march of the initiate by self-discipline, in-fixing the

[1] Potana's Bhagavatam (Vavilla 1915) P. 3. V-18. 'Palikedidi bhagavatamata.'
[2] P. 3. V-21. 'Onaram nannaya tikkanadi kavulu'.
[3] P. 16. V-17. 'apasabdambula gudiyun'.
[4] P. 17. V-100. 'tana kuladharmamun vidaci'.
[5] P. 22. V-140. nigamamulu reyi cadivina.

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mind and intensely loving the external manifest creation. This love and devotion has to be pointedly concentrated in the triple states of all human activity — mental, bodily and vocal. This triune progress is converged towards the All-Pervading Providence, which is Omniscient, the *ultimate* and the only Standing Ground. This is philosophy and its explicitness is, as Emerson says, 'Homesickness of the soul'. Apparently the divided life-monad (*jīva*) seeks back or retraces itself into the *ultimate home*. Devotionalism is the Homesickness. This *marg* known as *bhakti* seems to be of Dravidian origin as found in Padma Purana.[6] Bhakti a youthful damsel has two sons — jnana and vairagya, who have prematurely grown aged and diseased. In the Kali Age this Bhakti-mother is distressed and Narada, the itinerant divine sage-devotee chivalrously trots round the worlds in search of a remedy to receive jnana and vairagya into a rejuvenated state. Then he learns that jnana-yajna satkarma and namajapa, which are equated to the chanting of Bhagavata, will reinstate the two sons who find themselves rotten before ripe in the Kali Age.

The Aryan culture has integrated into itself this Bhakti-cult, i.e. Devotional psychic-process :

> 'You can't get at Achyuta (the Indestructible and Imperishable) by acts of penances, sacrifices, philanthropy, regimen, austerities and much less by skill, as you can comprehend by Devotion. This is certain.'[7]

II. A bevy of celestial maidens were enjoying a bath in the river. On its bank, it chanced, 'Śuka', the great *avadhūt* and a born saint passed in *dishabille*. The maids saw him and remained undisturbed in their physical and psychical poise. But soon after his parent Krsna Dvaipayana (Vyāsa) went the same way in his anchorite robes in search of his son, but the damsels felt the presence of a stranger and hurried to dress themselves with a sense of self-preservation of decorum and this act on their part, Vyasa thought was a discourteous behaviour towards him and in bitter chagrin complained to the damsels as to why his son was treated in perfect detached poise. The maids said :

> 'Your son in this tranquillised mental state is always above the differences of this world, as he is an elevated being beyond distinctions ; but lo ! you are "ages" below *him*.'[8]

Vyasa in utter despondency met Narada who questioned :

> O! darling of Parasara why this despondency ? You are a creator, you fathered the grand epic, Mahabharata ; you have deciphered, analysed and re-assembled the vedic contents, you have conquered the inimically disposed six passions, you have given out the exegesis of the ultimate wisdom, you are the supreme among the yogis, and you are the ethical preceptor and why this fickle disposition now and why this sorrow ?[9]

Vyasa supplicated Narada to tell him his lapses which according to him were the causes of his incorrigible despondency : Narada in resume told him thus :

> 'You have indeed fully dealt with the spread of Dharma in your ere-long works. But you lapsed into an omission by not emphasising and projecting the tales of Visnu ; why elaborate Dharma which may not earn the appreciation ? Put trust in God, the Lord and indite his all-embracing qualities. It shall bring you psychic solace.'[10]

Thus the *Bhagavata* was composed by Vyasa.

Parīksit alias Visnurāt was so called because during his brief pre-natal sojourn, he saw a figure of the stature of a thumb protecting him. After evolving himself out into this world, he began to seek and explore for an encore of his pre-natal vision he had of the Lord who saved him and thereafter he was called Pariksit — Scrutiniser-Pursuer-Explorer. It is so with every earnest *jīva*, which strives for seeking the Lord. But he needs a guide — a guru to lead him through the Highway of *salvation*.

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[6] Padma Purana :
'Utpanna dravide saham
Vrddhim Karnatake gata'.

[7] P. 528. V-243. Cikkadu Vratamulu.

[8] P. 14. niku nataniki mahantarambu galadu.

[9] P. 16. V-89. 'Dhatavu bharata sruti vidhatavu'.

[10] P. 16. V-95. 'ancitamyana dharmacarya mantayu'.

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In the wake of an anathema, Pariksit found himself at bay with only a seven-day recess to live on. His bewilderment did not get any encouraging response from his court-priests. Then came 'Suka'.

Samsara-snake-bitten (Samsara sarpa dastam) is the bane of living in the phenomenal existence. There is no exception. Immunity can be set only by the grace of the Lord and through the precious preaching by a Guru. The *holy book Bhagavata* is the means. Guru is the *jāngalika*. His spiritual administration gives the acolyte the psychic lift; subject to the grace of the Lord. Living in this world is always a poisoned existence and an antidote has to be applied.

> 'Praise to thee O! Suka, Lord of the yogins, thou art the accomplished of the Brahman, you saved the recipient of Visnu's grace — Pariksit, bitten by Samsara-serpent.' [11]

Pariksit is the royal listener. Suka is the ascetic reconteur. Bhagavata is produced. The result is, the king attained salvation.

* The whole of Bhagavata narration turns round the fly wheel of Lord Sri Krishna's episodic life. He and the milk-maids of Brindavan constitute the mythical significances of the Godhood and the beings of the Universe. Life-monads are the eternal brides awaiting the hand-out of the Lord — the Paramount Lover. Gopis are symbolically the representatives of the yearning souls of all time.

God is the eternal Purusha. All creation is feminine to God and every soul is his destined bride. This is the mythological sheet-anchor of literarily expressed tales of Sri Krishna. They are not immoral but only amoral. The contents of these parables are intellectual and so understood correctly in spite of their apparent suggestions of eroticism. For purposes of clarity and pointed understanding, the classic example of Pariksit's query is cited when this royal sage was in a perilous state in the wake of a tragic imprecation. The question is regarding Sri Krishna's behaviour with the milk-maids. Suka: 'Listen, O king, you do not understand the distinction, but are judging the Lord as though He were a man'. This work of Bhagavata is not a mere moral treatise but is a Pratika — a support for contemplation. If one deprecates the Hero's morals one has already misconceived the genre. The worthy recipients are like the gold cups to receive the rare milk of the tigress — the wisdom of the ultimate — (Vyaghri Kshira nyāya).

It can be taken as settled now that 'Rama' can be comprehended by the elite and the layman; but Sri Krishna can be absorbed only by the superior devotee — an *avadhūt* and that in state-sublime (Turia avastha).

III. Devout inspiration is Potana's *forte*. Nectar-soaked words honey out and the readers of all ages, always taste the sweetness of ambrosial narration, that is never overtaken by forgetfulness. With ease of dictional flow, he can open out a vista of vision of any scene, situation or complex psychological characteristics. From the processional emanation of creation of the phenomenal world to the simple daily events of life, from the description of wild forests to the beautiful gardens, from the highest cataracts of the Himalayan ravines to the ordinary streamlets of rural sites, he, like an adept represents in colourful word-pictures, sceneries of aesthetic and philosophical symbolism.

The perennial question for the inquirer is:

> 'Kaliyuga is replete with persons who are wearied, dull-witted, short-lived, afflicted with cancerous diseases, impoverished and so can never perform virtuous acts. So please make me a listener to the means by which *happiness* is attained and psychic poise is accomplished.' [12]

Just as great medicines are encased in the tiniest of receptacles, Potana gloriously engulfs the profoundest thoughts in simple but euphonic words. One reads them and feels the

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[11] Vyasa's Bhagavata (*Kalyana Kalpataru* Edition). XII-13. V-21.

* This view is gathered from the writings of Dr A. K. Coomaraswamy.

[12] P. 7. V-44. 'alasulu manda buddhulu'.

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gamut of spiritual exhilaration permeating his own being.

Devotional ecstasy fumes out in the narration of the stories of Dhruva, Prahlāda, Vāmana, Bhīshma, Gajendra and other hagiological tales. Potana's piety, inspired writing and thematic narration of any fabulous or legendary tale always holds out to the reader a reality of experience and accomplishment. Prahlada's theopathetic life, Gajendra's agonised wailing for relief and innumerable other passages remain memorable ones for ever. He infuses his devotion in the readers and no wonder he remains a saint-poet (*kavi* in the Vedic sense) richly deserving adoration and veneration of the elite and the laymen.

Potana describes in memorable verses every being's primary, perennial and ultimate duty — rather *a must.*

> 'This body, what for is it except for offering prayers, otherwise it remains a hollow dermatoid-sack; what for is the faculty of vision, except be it for looking on the Lord of the celestials; it is the worthy head that bows before the Sesasayi (the Lord lying on the serpent couch). The ears are merited when they listen to the Omnipresent; The tongue worthily praises the Lord of the Heavens otherwise it shall be the noisy flapper. If the hands do not offer the homage to the Lord, they remain the lifeless branches of wood. Words uttered in Lord's praise are the good words; mind is worthy if it is mindful of the Lord; intellect is worthy if it is rivetted in awareness on the Lord of the Disens; the good day is that when prayers are offered; study is worth it only if it is about the Lord; the Master is best if he initiates (the pupil) into Godliness; a parent is the best father if he guides the son into the marvels of the *Divinity*.[13]

The elite, the austere saints, with cleansed and infixed introspection, in great devotion surrender themselves, their all unto the Lord Hari and thus disentangle themselves from the gyve of this mundane phenomenon and achieve the Divine Ecstasy. The eligible one controls the vital breaths, abandons all passions and fixes the mind on the Omnipresent Lord. In a discourse, the majestic panorama of Godhood is similed forth to the perfect human form (microcosm). The initiate attains to a progressive realisation of the True-Principle by this final psychic process. Ever the visual world is a transitory processional show, not permanent and never yielding to the realisation of the Truth.

In Hindi (Avadhi dialect) we have the saga of Rama sung by Bhakta Tulasidas. Vying with it is the Holy Book of Potana; spilling widely Devotionalism. It is the ardent hope of the modern Telugus to wait for the appearance of a Potana to sing the Ramayana in Telugu in future. Will one be born? You never can tell!

[13] P. 517. V-169 & 170. 'Kamalaksu narcinu & Kamjaksu naku kāni'.

HOLY BOOKS OF NIJAGUNA SHIVAYOGI

PRABHU SHANKARA

Nijaguna Shivayogi, a mystic-philosopher who is supposed to have lived round about the sixteenth century in the Kannada country is held in very high esteem by a fairly large section of the devout public. An illumined soul, himself established in the heights of Advaitic realisation, he spared no strain to make the masses feel at home with the ideas of the Immortal Soul, which after all is their real nature. He is equally majestic in commanding the unreserved regard of persons with scholastic learning by demonstrating in clear terms that the highest Truth is very simple and could be communicated in intelligible terms without any academic pedantry or philosophical jargon. In addition he was endowed with a rare poetic gift which enabled him to sing philosophy in tunes melodious and wean the public away from sense enjoyment to delight in the bliss immortal.

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His date is open to dispute and so is his biographical sketch that is handed down to us by tradition. He is said to have ruled the eastern part of the present Mysore State, the place around Kollegal. History is again painfully silent about any king with that name. Well, for the Indian mind tradition is more valuable than history. Accordingly it is believed that the king met a Guru who stressed the importance of renunciation as a necessary pre-requisite for self-realisation. The pleasures of the palace were too tempting to be renounced. The king gave the Guru to understand that he was quite willing to give up the world in favour of God, but the responsibilities of the kingdom would not release him easily.

One day the intelligent Guru sent a message to the king stating that he was caught by a plant and consequently could not call on him. Surprised at this the king ran to the spot only to find that it was the Guru who was embracing the plant with all his might and it was not the plant that had enmeshed him.

'Pray, leave it and come away,' cried the king.

'I can't, it simply won't leave me,' replied the Guru.

'But,' said the amazed king, 'it is you who are holding it so fast!'

'And so,' remarked the Guru, 'it is you who are clinging to the kingdom and not the kingdom to you!'

The disciple understood the implications. He shook off the kingdom as easily as the Guru did the plant and left in quest of the Supreme.

A hillock called Shambhulingana Betta in the vicinity of Kollegal is associated with his name. It is there that Nijaguna Shivayogi spent his life in austerities and later in writing his famous works and imparting spiritual knowledge to many a seeking soul.

Seven works are ascribed to Nijaguna Shivayogi. They speak at once of his profound scholarship, intimate acquaintance with a variety of subjects, intense devotion and his firm conviction that God alone is real and all else is illusory. There is an admirable harmony of erudition, devotion and knowledge in him which remind us of Sri Shankara.

Nijaguna is said to be a Veerashaiva. But quite contrary to the fundamental tenet of Veerashaivism which affirms the reality of the world, he negates it in unequivocal terms and siezes every opportunity to impress upon us that all things perceived by the senses are transitory in nature and have no absolute reality.

His works may be divided into four categories for the convenience of study. First of them is a minor work known as *Purathanara Thrividhi* or *Purathanara Stotra*. In 77 stanzas he has made an earnest appeal to the renowned and much adored ancient Shaiva saints, 63 in number, to grant him devotion and knowledge. Each stanza depicts the life of one saint. His power of condensation is commendable. One such can be cited as an illustration.

> 'I would like to live in bliss by becoming the affectionate child of Chirutondar, who cooked his son and served him to the Lord and earned His grace.'

In one of the invocatory verses he praises Uma thus :

> 'I bow down to Uma, who is undifferentiated in Shiva as the sweetness in the Ocean of Milk, coolness in the moonlight and fragrance in the flower.'

It would be nice if we could catch the melody of words in the original. '*Ingadōlolimpu beludingalolu tampu kusumangalolu kampu beredante paramanolu pingadagasutege natanappe.*'

These verses sung in praise of the ancient saints have become fairly popular and are taught to children in many homes.

The second category comprises of his four works on Vedanta. They are, *Paramartha Prakashike* a prose work, which is a commentary on Chennasadashiva Yogi's *Shivayoga Pradipika, Paramartha Geethe,* a comparatively short treatise on self-knowledge written in the form of a dialogue between the Guru and the disciple, *Paramanubhava Bodhe,* an abridged edition of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, expounding in clear terms the conver-

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sation between Yajnavalkya and Maitreyi, and *Anubhava Sara* another work on Vedanta.

One has to admit that the author has nothing new to add to the mighty Advaitic philosophical lore of India. But the edifice of his fame is built on the firm foundation that he has a unique way of putting his goods across. He addresses his audience with such intimacy that you have imbibed a good deal of apparently abstract ideas before you are actually conscious of it. To quote only a few of his similes :

'The king is in the inner chamber for the time being. The minister has to see him. He stations his retinue outside and proceeds all alone. So does the Jiva leave behind all its adjuncts and proceeds all alone to the Supreme Brahman.'

'Brahman is inactive. But the Jiva superimposes action on it because of the Ego. At the sun-rise the lotus blossoms, the blue-lotus closes, the earth hardens and the wax melts.'

'The Cloud moves, but we perceive that it is the moon that is moving.' 'The man in the boat feels as though the hills on the shores are moving.'

In his avowed attempt to carry Vedanta to the doors of common man he has achieved covetable success and in fact that is the secret of the unfading fame that he is enjoying these five hundred years.

Viveka Chintamani is a classical work, the first encyclopaedia in Kannada written in lucid and lovely prose. It may not answer all the exacting standards of the modern scientific encyclopaedias, but it certainly brings unbounded admiration from all quarters viewed from the point that it is the endeavour of a single individual placed under such difficult circumstances to collect material. It deals with thousands of subjects as diverse as prosody and philosophy, Vedas and Veerashaiva Lakshana, Poetics, Cosmology, Yoga, Astrology, the Varnashramas—well, there is, as if nothing under the sun that is not dealt with by Nijaguna, and he is undoubtedly a prodigy. The work was translated to Marathi some three hundred and fifty years ago by Shanthalinga Deshika.

In the opinion of the present writer it is his *Kaivalya Paddhathi* that is his masterpiece, in the sense that it is both autobiographical and original. It is a collection of songs in a number of *ragas*. There is a school that holds that this is the first work of musical compositions in Kannada. Whatever may be the authenticity of this statement, it is indisputable that both the content and form of the compositions are superb. There are numerous moods right from the struggle of a novice to the person of supreme realisation, laid bare before the reader, of course, couched in beautiful poetry, almost impossible to put again into any other language.

In a song in Saurashtra raga he addresses his mind as the cuckoo and says :

'The flower-arrowed one kills the mellow-hearted, parted lovers. Leave him and rest in the Lord, who grants His affection to the devotees.'

Let us listen to the melody of the original :

'Nallaranagalida melledeyara kolva Phullasharana pingi kogile,
Ella jivarigeravilladolavanceva balla Bhavanoliru kogile.'

In a stanza he speaks of the realisation he had attained, in terms of conviction :

'The bee buzzes near the flower half-blossomed. And so did my *jiva* listening to the music of the *Moolamantra* in the innermost recess of my Soul. Divine Light did flood all things. I was drowned in the ocean of Consciousness. Unconscious of all else I was enjoying the harvest of Bliss in the pure communion with the Divine.'

And here is the untranslatable original :

'Nasuvirida paragadalaranaridu mohisi bidade pasidu tumbe Jhēnkritiyolu jinuguvandadi ; Asuvinolage Moolamantra Nādaveseyalu, Jivadosageyagalodane divyakanti teevitu. Bacchabariya chitsudha rasambunidhiyolu mulugi eccharilladamalasukhada suggivadevutha, bicchi bēredōradante Shambhulingavanappi eccharadagidaccha paravashadolu nindenu.'

His six major works are known as the Shatshastra of Kannada. The words of this monk have left an indelible impression on the minds of the Kannadigas. They have been enshrined in their hearts for centuries. And it is rightly hoped that the teachings of this great yogi will continue to reverberate in the hearts of people for many more centuries to come.

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RAMACARITAMANASA

CHANDRA KUMARI HANDOO

The *Rāma-carita-mānasa* is an inspired book and is treated as reverentially as a scripture by all Hindi-speaking Hindus of Northern and Central India. Perhaps ever since the book was written, but most certainly in modern times when people are less inclined to the study of Sanskrit, this is the one and only holy book which they know and read. The masses and cultured classes have as much faith in it as if it were the equivalent of the *Vedas,* the *Upanishads* or the *Gita.* Whilst these books may be said to contain abstract truths, the *Manasa* is the application of these very principles in the everyday life of man. It deals with problems of social, political and family life from the point of view of *dharma* or righteous living and religion. It is more idealistic than the *Valmiki* and *Adhyatma Ramayana.* As Babu Shyam Sunder Das says in his book *Goswami Tulasidasa,* 'Due to his (*Tulasi's*) intense devotion to Rama, the high moral tone that flows like a current in the *Ramacaritamanasa,* is purer and deeper than the *Valmiki Ramayana'*. (p. 122).

In the manner of the true votary of Hinduism, Tulasi betrays no narrowness of heart in religious matters. Devotion to Siva is no less desirable than devotion to Rama, in fact the two are identical. If Tulasi is a follower of the path of devotion he does not decry the path of knowledge. Though he does not indulge in the criticism of society, to uphold the social order is also not the purpose behind his book. He does not aim at acquiring a name as a poet or religious teacher. He himself says that his only motive in writing the *Manasa* is 'the happiness of his own inner self' (*Svāntah sukhāya*). Spiritual experiences that kept bubbling up in his devotional heart like a fresh water spring, forced a channel for themselves and this stream was his poetry. Thus we find a wonderful flow of thoughts and words in his writings. Devoid of ornate language, forced expression or confused ideas the *Manasa* is singularly clear of all artificiality.

Countless are the tributes that have been paid to Tulasidasa by Indian and foreign writers. Sri Raj Bahadur Lamgora in an article called, *Visva sāhitya men Rāmacaritamānasa kā sthāna,* (The place of *Ramacaritamanasa* in the literature of the world) published in the Hindi *Kalyana,* September 1938, quotes a number of them. He tells us of Visali, a Muslim poet who lived in Ayodhya and having heard the recitation of the *Manasa,* became a devotee of the Prince of Ayodhya or the '*Shahazada-e-Avadha'*. He wrote a book in Persian called *Māmukimā* in which he has expressed his devotion to Rama in the following couplet: *Māmukīmā kūca dila dārema, rukha va duniyā va dīna ārema,* meaning, 'I live (in Ayodhya) in the lanes of my beloved and have turned (my face) against the world and (conventional) religion.' Sri Lamgora also tells us of Edward Thompson, a British novelist, play-wright and professor of Bengali at Oxford, who in a review published in the *London Athenacum* for July, 30, 1927 said, 'no important Indian language is without at least a considerable literature; .... Hindi in the *Ramayana* of Tulasidas, a singularly noble poem which every autumn is acted in the villages of the United Provinces during an ecstatic fortnight.' (quoted in the appendix of *Unhappy India* by Lala Lajput Rai, p. 505). In another book called *Englishman defends Mother India,* the author Ernest Wood says that the *Manasa* is superior to the best books of the Latin and Greek languages. Sri Lamgora also gratefully acknowledges his debt to Maulvi Nayaz Muhammed, his school teacher during 1899-1900 in the village of Mandiyahun, district Jaunpur, U.P. He saw the Maulvi read the *Koran* and *Manasa* together and through the example and teaching of this worthy teacher, he also learnt to love and

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appreciate the Hindi language and its best fruit the *Manasa.*

The historian Vincent Smith in his book, *Akbar, The Great Mughal* says :

> 'It is a relief to turn from the triviality and impurity of most of the versifiers in Persian to the virile, pure work of a great Hindu — the tallest tree in the "magic garden" of medieval Hindu poesy. His name will not be found in the Ain-i-Akbari, or in the pages of any Muslim annalist, or in the books of European authors based on the narratives of the Persian historians. Yet that Hindu was the greatest man of his age in India and greater even than Akbar himself, in as much as the conquest of the hearts and minds of millions of men and women affected by the poet was an achievement infinitely more lasting and important than any or all the victories gained in war by the monarch . . . Tulasidasa was the name of the Hindu for whom such pre-eminence is claimed.' (Quoted by Prof. S. N. Sharma in his book, *The Jewel of Hindi Literature*, p. xv.)

We shall end this topic by a quotation from a recent Hindi book on Tulasidasa in which the author says :

> 'For the fulfilment of desires canto V (*Sundara Kanda*) is recited in the form of a hymn . . . (certain other lines) are considered to be the equivalent of the *Gayatri mantra.* From the point of view of righteous living this book is used as a moral code or *Purana.* It is a musical poem because people sing it. It is also a drama because Goswami Tulasidasaji started his *Rama lila* on the basis of this book which even now is performed in the same manner everywhere. Therefore the *Ramacaritamanasa* is an epic poem, song, hymn, *mantra* and drama. It is to be heard, seen and read. It represents all acknowledged forms of poetry at one and the same time. No other poem in the world is full of such excellence.' (Acharya Sitaram Chaturvedi, p. 9.)

To give an idea of the philosophy and devotion of Tulasidasa, as well as the distinct character he creates with varying human relations, their conflicts, motives of action and impulses, his description of nature and other topics is not an easy task . . . Grierson who owes no allegiance to Tulasi and his Rama except the loyalty and kinship of one cultured mind to another says of the *Manasa,* 'I have never met a person who had read it in the original and who was not impressed by it as the work of a great genius.'

By the inclusion of minor *Pauranic* stories, in the sequence of events and description of nature, Tulasi has borrowed a great deal from the *Valmiki* and *Adhyatma Ramayanas* and *Hanumān-nātaka* but nowhere has there been a lifeless imitation. Originality has been preserved everywhere. Scattered through the book and delicately woven in the texture of the story, sometimes we find translations literal or otherwise, of verses from the *Gita, Upanishads, Bhagavata, Puranas, Kalidasa's* plays, Sanskrit Dramas and other books. This reveals Tulasi's great learning and deep study. By bringing the wisdom of the sages to the masses at large in their own familiar everyday language, Tulasi has rendered a great service to the motherland. Considering the opposition he encountered on the language basis, this was no small achievement but our obligation to him goes much further.

By giving form to the Formless, that Incomprehensible Brahman which the Vedas describe as 'not this, not this, *neti-neti*' has been brought down to the level of human understanding. We are unable to meditate on the Formless God, nor have we the patience, faith or leisure to practise austerities in the cave or the mountain, but the very idea that God in His incarnation lived like one of us and shared our joys and sorrows, brings peace and solace to the human heart. The poet does not allow us to forget the divinity of Rama at any moment. He is at once so strong, fearless and brave and yet so loving and tender, and above all so very human in His dealings with men that we cannot help giving Him our hearts. In whatever frame of mind we may approach the *Manasa,* if we but plunge into its cooling waters, we shall find to our great delight that almost unknown to us and like the first ray of the rising sun, Rama has entered the hitherto dark and lone temple of our hearts. In our opinion this is due not to the grace of Rama, but to the grace of that lover and servant of Rama, known to the world as the blessed Tulasi.

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VICHARSAGAR

RAMLAL

It is a universally acknowledged fact that the supreme object of worship and adoration is the Satchidananda Brahma, the all real, attributeless, formless and eternal one. But the same Brahma accepts forms and attributes and is worshipped and adored by devotees, through intense devotion and by doers of religious rites and performances, through yajna etc. with the expectation of reward or recompense. The seekers after self-knowledge or atmajnana take recourse to contemplation and synthetical analysis of the supreme Being, which is the path of knowledge. The followers of Vedanta voluntarily tread the path of self-realisation in order to secure complete identity with the attributeless Brahma, Paramatma or all-pervading Reality. Saint Nischaldas was a follower of this path of knowledge.

This medieval saint was a learned sage of great repute. His Vicharsagar sings the glory of Satchidananda Brahma. He was the Shankaracharya of the Hindi-speaking medieval world ; this assertion in no way constitutes any exaggeration. Whatever Shankaracharya contributed in the realm of Sanskrit literature to Vedanta philosophy, was brought about by the exertions of Saint Nischaldas in the arena of Hindi literature. His Vicharsagar as an original attempt stands as one of the precious jewels of Vedanta literature in Hindi. Vicharsagar is complete in itself ; it is not at all necessary to study other books of Vedanta to understand its mystery. Nischaldas adored Kārana Brahma and in doing so he strictly observed the rules and regulations of the spiritual path adopted by Saint Kabir and followed by Saint Dadu, who laid the foundation-stone of Brahma Sampradaya in medieval India. Nischaldas adopted a sympathetic attitude to both the 'Ramita Ram' of Dadu and the 'Sahib' of Kabir and considered them as the eternal supreme spirit. A survey of Vicharsagar leads to the conclusion that Nischaldas was well-versed in Vedanta philosophy. The Brahma-Sampradaya of Dadu also wielded a great influence on his mind ; this historical fact cannot be ignored for a moment that he belonged to the sect of Saint Dadu which was embraced by a large number of people all over Punjab and Rajasthan in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries A.D. As the author of Vicharsagar was a native of Punjab, it was quite natural that he came into contact with the saints and sages of the Dadu sect. The Shankaracharya of the Dadu sect — Saint Sundardas, established the reality of Karana Brahma in his poems and songs and it is obvious that Vicharsagar, in true spirit, advocates the same Supreme Being. Sundardas says :

> 'Brahma is disinterested, self-sufficient, endless and all pure, it is nothing less or nothing more ; Brahma is perfect, it is beyond and above, it is inside and outside, it is formless, real and is embodied in form ; Brahma is both the master and the servant, it is Brahma alone that sees its own spectacle.'

Nischaldas adored this Brahma, as acknowledged and contemplated in the Brahma Sampradaya. In the concluding portion of every chapter of Vicharsagar, Nischaldas paid high homage to Saint Dadu and pleaded the oneness of Brahma and Guru or Preceptor. He said :

> 'Dadu is all merciful, an emblem of true happiness and the ever flowing fountain of eternal light, impenetrable by mind and beyond contemplation.' (*Vicharsagar*, 2. 15.)

Nischaldas was born in a Jat-tribe in the village of Kungar of Hissar in the Punjab. From his very childhood, he was interested in learning and acquiring spiritual knowledge. He was always alert towards the service of saints and sages and his instinct was gradually infusing in him a true spirit of renunciation.

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He came to Varanasi for study and in the course of time qualified himself with the knowledge of scriptures and the Vedanta. He entered into discussions and holy discourses with learned scholars and achieved proficiency in Brahmasutras and their commentary by Shankaracharya. It is alleged that he also went to Navadwip, the seat of Navya Nyāya to study the mysteries of Nyaya philosophy. He had knowledge of the Chhanda Shastra, metrical science too. Returning from Varanasi, he settled in village Kihdanli near Delhi and was initiated by a saint of the Dadu sect. He commenced studying as well as preaching the Vedanta philosophy there and simultaneously founded a seat for Samskrit-learning which is still traceable there in the small village. Raja Ramsing of Bundhi accepted him as his spiritual preceptor and at his invitation, he went to his capital and remained there for some time. Nischaldas wrote Vicharsagar in Kihdanli. His other important work is *Vritti-Prabhakar*. *Mukti Prakash* is another work by the saint. He breathed his last in Kihdanli in 1920 of Vikrama era.

Vicharsagar is a work of very great importance. Swami Vivekananda was of the opinion that no greater work of Vedanta or spirituality was produced in the last two hundred years. Indeed, Vicharsagar is one of the most popular works of its kind. In this work, Nischaldas revealed and unfolded the mysteries of the all-pervading Supreme Spirit with the best understanding, clearest insight, and deepest wisdom. He depicted clearly in the introductory portion of Vicharsagar the identity of Jiva and Brahma. Nischaldas speaks about Vicharsagar in the following words :

> 'My Vicharsagar is full of water — the Vedic dictums, this is quite deep, only expert divers can be delighted in tasting it.' (1. 6.)

Without having a study of Vicharsagar, no one could be able to dispel the ignorance — this is what he felt at the time of writing the book. Vicharsagar sheds light on all the branches of Vedantic philosophy in its subtle delicacy of thoughts and ideas of adoration of the Self. Vicharsagar deals with the ways and means of removing the morbidities of the mind. The mind usually falls a victim to three kinds of morbidities ; they are mala or impurity, āvarana or veil of ignorance and vikshepa or distraction or mental confusion. The disinterestedness in actions destroys the impurity, if it is pursued in a true spirit of service or dedication and faith. Thus, when the mind undergoes self-purification through unselfish actions, knowledge and devotion, the supreme consciousness dawns. As regards the fourfold paths or Sadhana-chatushtaya, the saint explains them in clear words. True discrimination grants self-realisation, it is through this faculty that the eternal nature of the Atma or self is experienced. Vicharsagar defines viveka :

> 'The Self is eternal ; the world is destructible, such a knowledge is viveka and this is the root of all the means of realisation.' (1. 13.)

The renunciation of sensuous enjoyments in all parts of the universe is vairagya or detachment. To restrain the mind from going towards sensuousness is real mental control or *sama*. To check the senses from enjoying passions and worldly pleasure is *dama* or self-restraint. Reliance on truth, on the scriptures and on the words of the spiritual preceptor is faith or *sraddhā*. The disappearance or destruction of mental distraction is *samadhana* or self-composure. To avoid sensuous enjoyment considering them to be just like poison and to have repentance constitute *uparati* or withdrawing. To bear pain and suffering of heat and cold, hunger and thirst etc.. is *titiksha* or real endurance. The realisation of Brahma is *moksha* or final beatitude ; the desire of such a beatitude is *mumukshutva*. All these lead to the attainment of true knowledge, and are inward means of practice of spirituality. Yajna and holy sacrifices are termed as outward practice or sadhana. Vicharsagar declares :

> 'These eightfold means of spiritual practice are inward ones while the sacrifices and yajna etc. are outward. Pursue the former and leave the latter.' (1. 23.)

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Though the outward practice through performance of sacrifices etc., grants purity to the mind, still it is not so much useful as is the inward practice comprising the above eight-fold means. Hearing about reality, of the significance of Vedantic knowledge, is *sravana* and the contemplation on Brahma is *manana*. The thought of existence of the Lord, devoid of unrealistic conceptions of non-spiritual aspect, is *nididhyasana* or uninterrupted thinking and its mature state is *samadhi* or perfect absorption in thought centred on the supreme consciousness. The first three are not the direct means of knowledge but they remove the morbidities leading to adverse and purposeless results or fruits. In the light of the teachings of Vicharsagar, only that person is the real aspirant towards the knowledge of the Self, who is fully equipped with the inward means of practice of spiritual realisation.

Saint Nischaldas imparted the knowledge of Self-realisation by the creation of three allegorical characters — Tattwadrishti, Adrishti and Tarkadrishti, who are introduced as sons of king Subhasantati. Vicharsagar lays a great stress on devotion and faith for the Guru or spiritual guide. This faith serves as the foundation-stone for self-knowledge, this is what the saint's cult depicts. Kabir too preached this faith. Vicharsagar describes thus the true characteristics of a spiritual teacher :

> 'The guru or teacher should be well-versed in the Vedas. He must not differentiate between God and a living being, Jivatma and should realise the presence of his self in God and sentient being ; he must not feel anything devoid of the existence of Brahma.' (3. 4.)

The spiritual teacher presents the transitory nature of the world before his disciples. The knowledge of the Self can be had by the grace of the spiritual guide, otherwise it will ever remain a mystery. Explaining the importance of the knowledge gained from a spiritual guide, Vicharsagar says :

> 'The Vedas are like a vast ocean, their knowledge is tasteless like the salty water, the words of the teacher are just like clouds, they make it sweet and pleasant.' (3. 8.)

The knower of Brahma becomes Brahma, his sayings are just like Vedic hymns, eternal and divine in character. The grace conferred upon the disciple by his spiritual guide enables him to have a clear understanding of the all-pervading Being or Brahma. True and complete dedication at the lotus-like feet of the teacher grants perfect bliss and real happiness to the seeker of the eternal beatitude which is the complete oneness of Brahma and the Jivatma. The seeker of true knowledge having possessed discrimination of indwelling Brahma desires the end of three kinds of suffering or pain — adhyatmika, adhidaivika and adhibhautika. The pain caused by disease, hunger etc., is adhyatmika, the pain caused by snake, tiger and thief etc., constitutes the adhibhautika and the suffering caused by Yaksha, evil spirit and stars comes to be known as adhidaivika. Vicharsagar encourages to perform the daily duties or *nityakarma* i.e. *sandhya-vandana* etc., in order to gain salvation or liberation from the bondage of life and death. It speaks of four kinds of *Vihitakarma* or prescribed actions in tune with the scriptures. The *nitya-karma* is daily action consisting of sandhya etc. The *naimittika* karma is occasional work performed on account of some reason. The *kamya* karma is done for some reward or fruit and the *prayaschitta* karma is practised for uprooting the bad result or ugly consequence of sinful work. The aspirant after liberation should not perform *kamya* and *nisiddha* or prohibited and unprescribed work. Kamya action grants heaven and the nishiddha-work leads to hell, so they are totally useless.

The narration says that all the three sons of king Subhasantati—Tattwadrishti, Adrishti and Tarkadrishti contemplated on the nature of Brahma, having taken shelter at the feet of their Guru or spiritual teacher. This story of the king and his sons is nothing but an allegory, which unfolds the mysterious and unknowable nature of the supreme spirit. In this narration, visions of 'reality', 'knowledge' and 'reason' are available. On being questioned by Tattvadrishti the teacher ex-

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plained to him the philosophy of non-dualism and said :

> 'The world is not in me; I am Brahma. This is the true knowledge.' (4. 62.)

With the annihilation of ignorance, the world ceases to exist in the real sense and ultimately it enters the realm of Brahma and acquires the form of Satchidananda.

Vicharsagar advocates universal adoration of the Supreme Spirit. It does not criticise any sect or doctrine but simply presents its clear thoughts to the seekers of supreme Reality. It adopts a synthetic attitude for Brahma-realisation and supports the paths of Karma, upasana and jnana. It says :

> 'If the adoration of Brahma is beyond your reach, attempt to worship the Lord in His saguna aspect. If you cannot do this, perform holy and unselfish work. If it does not hold good in your case then chant the sacred names of Rama.' (5. 168.)

Tattwadrishti has been described as the follower of path of jnana or clear perception, Adrishti is depicted as completely merged in Brahmahood, Tarkadrishti is introduced as having well understood that all the scriptures lay stress on the adoration of the all-pervading Brahma and liberation from bondage of death and birth. This liberation comes through the real knowledge of the Self.

Vicharsagar of Saint Nischaldas is a scripture of liberation, *moksha shastra*. Vicharsagar commends the path of self-realisation and adoration of Satchidananda Paramatma ; it is an original contribution of the saint-scholar Nischaldas and is an invaluable piece of literature that properly depicts the true nature of self-abiding Brahma and proves the transitoriness of the world.

SURSAGAR

T. S. RAGHAVAN

An āstika is one who accepts the authority of the Holy Scriptures. This is because the way to eternal peace and salvation of mankind is indicated therein. Whichever book reflects those ideas contained in the authoritative scriptures should be respected with equal reverence. This belief and practice alone have influenced and nurtured the people's mind from time immemorial and the torch of that true knowledge which permeates those holy books has been held aloft by people who have taken upon themselves the role of reformers in ethics, religion and philosophy, in spite of the vicissitudes of life.

In this way, saints and holy men have appeared in the Indian scene and have preserved the purity of Hinduism from decadence and disintegration in changing religious, social and political atmosphere. At places, poets arose to rouse the people above the evils of society and kindled through their soul-stirring songs the desire to tread the way along the cherished goal of emancipation from the shackles of slavery and bondage in this material world. Such poets were truly seers of high order and epoch-makers of astounding brilliance. They sought the language of the common man as their medium of expression. In fact, they completely changed the general attitude of the people towards the material world and directed them towards bhakti or devotion to God. As Dr Rajendra Prasad says (Speeches —1952-56) :

> 'If in spite of a long and chequered history, we are still a living nation and have always been able to get the better of the clouds of all-pervading darkness, it is because of the teachings and good wishes of these noble souls.'

They more or less brought about a cultural synthesis barring the opposing elements by laying enough emphasis on the more obvious necessities of devotion and sincerity in man's

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sojourn in this world. They pleaded for a better understanding so that the faith might last eternally. They expressed their faith in the highest value of love for the realisation of the ultimate reality. As John Caird has said :

> 'What we call love is, in truth, the finding of our own life in the life of another, the losing of our individual selves to gain a larger self.' (*An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, p. 116.)

Later half of the 15th century saw one such great soul in Vallabhacarya who was propagating the Shuddādwaita system of philosophy amongst the people. He was sufficiently influenced by the teachings of Vishnuswamin, Nimbarka, Madhavacarya and Ramanujacarya. He was preaching the way of Grace or Pushtimarga, i.e. a way of bhakti taught by the Bhagavadgita, Bhagavata and the Vaishnavite scriptures. He adopted the word 'poshana' (nourishment) of the Bhagavata used with reference to the grace of the Almighty. In Hindi Literature, he has been included under the Krishna-bhakti age, as the Bhagavata was held so highly in importance. With him, Krishna kavyas began to appear on all sides. He had many great followers and disciples. His own son, Vittalanatha, took the father's order and propagated the system. Mainly 8 disciples are noted and are grouped as *Ashtachhap Kavi*. Surdas, a blind poet, is spoken of as the chief of this famous group.

Much about the personality of Surdas and his life are not available to us. This is the weakness of Indian Literature which we have to painfully acknowledge. However, it is said that Surdas was born to Ramdas and his wife, in 1540 Samvat (1484 A.D.) in a village known as Runakata (Renuka Kshetra) situated between Agra and Mathura, and died in 1620 Samvat (1564 A.D.) in Parsoli. He is believed to be a Saraswat Brahmin. There are no conclusive evidences to reveal that he belonged to the family of the famous Hindi poet Chand Bardoi or Brahma-bhatta. It is also not known whether he was born-blind or became blind. It is said that once he fell into a pit and was rescued by Lord Krishna who appeared before him. Later on, not willing to see any other object in the world, after having seen the Supreme Lord, he blinded his eyes with needles. Some others say that as an act of repentance, he blinded his eyes due to his misbehaviour with a lovely woman who is supposed to have disappeared after the incident. He wrote three books, *Sursāgar*, *Sursārāvali* and *Sāhitya lahiri*. He is supposed to have composed nearly 1¼ lakhs of poems but only five to six thousand of them are now extant. All his works deal only with the Krishna-bhakti. *Sursaravali* is also called *Sursāgara-sārāvali*, as it is an essence of the contents of *Sursagar*.

Sursagar contains 12 skandhas, like Shrimad Bhagavata, and though the story of Krishna is spoken of there, it is not a mere translation of the Bhagavata. The poet in Surdas has had his way. The tenth skandha of the Bhagavata alone has received elaborate treatment here and the rest have received a brief or summarising attention. In depicting the juvenile and sportful activities of Lord Krishna, the love of the Gopis, and the motherly affection, Surdas has excelled every one of the Hindi poets and has earned for himself an immortal name. Therefore it is said that in him the greatness of poet Ganga, the simile of Balbir and the eloquence of Keshavadas have been harmoniously blended. 'Whatever Surdas told was a fact, Tulasi told whatever was wonderful and Kabir told the rest.' The place of Surdas in the atmosphere of Hindi religious literature is that of Sun, while Tulasi and Keshavadas stood for Moon and the stars respectively. Devotion was the main stamp of his works and he was completely influenced by the Pushti marga of Vallabhacarya whom he accepted as his master. To an extent, we can say that he was a mystic and sang out his mystic experience in his *Sursagar*. As said by R. M. Jones :

> 'The mystical experience has undoubtedly a poetic value. But it consists in leaps of insight through heightened life, in an intensifying of vision through the fusing of all the deep-lying powers of intellect, emotions and will, and in a corresponding surge of conviction through the dynamic integration of personality, rather than in the

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"gift" of new knowledge-facts.' (*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.*)

So, in that light, Surdas comes before us only as a mystic poet who has studied the world together with its varying behaviour. Now we may try to understand the Pushtimarga which Surdas accepted from his great master. It may be briefly explained as follows.

Lord Krishna is the Purushesvara (lord of all beings) and Purushottama (greatest of the beings). He is also called Purna Brahma (Supreme-Self). By His own will, the world has been created. All creation is a part of this Brahman who is angi (whole). All others are His angas (parts). As is natural, the parts attach to the whole and engender an ardent desire to go near the whole and thereby undergo suffering during separation. For the sake of the devotees the Lord performs His sportful activities (lila), in his Vaikuntha which is characterised as Vyapi to distinguish it from ordinary Vaikuntha. The problem or the goal of mankind is only to enter into the sportful activities, through devotion characterised by love (prema-lakshana-bhakti). Through this love only, which is called attachment (asakti) jiva attains the anugraha and obtains the Pushti of the Lord. In this communion, the difference between the parts (angas) and the whole (angi) disappears and the jiva enjoys in Supreme Bliss (Parama Sukha). Then there is no sorrow, no difference, and no want.

The question may arise now, as to what is this lila in which jivas have to enter through devotion characterised by love. If the Lord is spoken of as one beyond one's reach, beyond one's perception and that He is inexplicable, then how is this description of His sportful activities for the sake of the devotees to be explained? To this it is replied that the Lord can be realised through experience, He is of the form of bliss, happiness, truth. The realisation of the Lord is not so much difficult as to get at His grace (prem). So, devotion which is characterised by love is enjoined on all and lila is the province of that devotion characterised by love. Vallabhacarya has written in his Brahma sutra bhasya that the Supreme Lord is qualified only by His eternal lila. Or, through lila alone jivas get liberated and to enter into lila itself is supreme liberation. So, it is known that indulging in such eternal sportful activities is the nature of the Lord and if such lila is to be the refuge of all the jivas, then, jivas have to yearn to reach that lila stage. This is possible only through love as a spouse (kantabhava or dampatya bhava). Therefore we find Surdas has personified jivas as the Gopis and the love of the Gopis itself is the Supreme devotion (parama bhakti). This prema or asakti is revealed through भ्रमरगीत, दानलीला, गोवर्धनधारन, पारस्परिक वार्तालाप, मुरलीस्तुति, गोचरन, विरहनिवेदन, माखन लीला. etc.

Surdas in his utter self-surrender to Lord Krishna sees Him in everything. He says that the attributeless Brahman is only a name of the Brahman with attributes — निर्गुण ब्रह्म के सगुण नाम। and asks to which country does this nirguna Brahman belong — निर्गुन कौन देस को वासी? We also find discussions to prove the Supremacy of saguna bhakti in relation to nirguna-upasana through the conversations of the Gopis with Uddhava, a nirgunavadin and friend of Krishna. Surdas lays much stress only on the bhakti, which is classified as sadhana and sadhya. The sadhana bhakti is only the endeavour to reach the Lord, while the sadhya bhakti is to devote oneself entirely at the mercy of the Lord so that the jiva may get the grace (anugraha) of the Lord — (*poshanam tadanugrahah* — Vallabha). Explaining this aspect, he says beautifully that as the child would retire to the lap of his mother after the day's mischief, so also the jivas seek the Lord. Thus he sets aside the jnanayoga and karmayoga. कर्मयोग पुनि ज्ञान उपासन, सब ही भ्रम भरमायो। श्रीवल्लभगुरु तत्व सुनायो, लीला भेद बतायो॥

The manner in which jiva attains immortality is also explained. In order to be released from all the deceit of the world, and to be one with the Supreme Being, the jivas undergo the four states which are called pravaha marga, mar-

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yada marga, pushti-marga and shuddha-pushti-marga; and the bhakti which they practise is also of pravaha pushti, maryada pushti, pushti-pushti and shuddha-pushti. Only at the last stage, the jivas become one with the Supreme. Surdas being a true devotee, has elaborately treated the last stage in his magnum opus. Asakti or attachment may be practised by any one of the nine stages, viz. shravana (hearing), kirtana (praying), smarana (recollecting), padasevana (serving), archana (worshipping), vandana (saluting), dasya (serving and depending), sakhya (friendly love), and atmanivedana (surrendering). This has been explained and elaborated by the Vallabhavadins in their 11 stages, viz. गुणमाहात्म्यासक्ति, रूपासक्ति, पूजासक्ति, स्मरणासक्ति, दास्यासक्ति, सख्यासक्ति, कान्तासक्ति, वात्सल्यासक्ति, आत्मनिवेदनासक्ति, तन्मयासक्ति, परमविरहासक्ति ॥

We may conclude therefore by indicating that Surdas was a true representative of the Vallabha school of thought besides being a true sadhaka of Krishna. His description in depicting the sentiment of Vatsalya in the lullaby of Yasoda while putting the child Krishna to sleep is par excellence. While describing the childish pranks and the motherly tenderness, we forget the blind Surdas. Similarly while describing the love-lorn condition of the Gopis in their separation from Lord Krishna, we forget ourselves and feel as if, we are transported to the atmosphere where the divine damsels tread. This means of devotion to the Lord is called the Madhuryopasana and Surdas has, indeed, excelled in the depiction of the mellifluity of such situations in his *Sursagar*.

BEEJAK

NONIKA HANDOO

> O my heart! the Supreme Spirit, the great Master, is near you: wake, oh wake!
> Run to the feet of your Beloved: for your Lord stands near to your head.
> You have slept for unnumbered ages; this morning you will not wake? [1]

Beejak is undoubtedly the most sacred and cherished gospel of the followers of Kabirdas. It was compiled by his disciples not before San 1603 or Samvat 1660, according to Dr Bhadwal, hence the songs are not exactly in their original form. After the death of Kabir, a great deal of emphasis was laid by his devotees on some of the poems of Beejak, which were revered like the Puranas. A landmark in the literature of devotionalism, it is also a book respected by all scholars of Hindi, as a gem in the field of literature.

Chiefly a book of moral precepts, Beejak evaluates all what Kabir stood for. Philosophically the follower of absolute reality, Kabir was at all times a rationalist. He imbibed the thoughts of his predecessors, accepted the virtues of the scriptures, but loudly condemning all rigidity, he says:

> 'Loving in bondage I have set myself free:
> I have broken away from the clutch of all narrowness.' [2]

He confesses 'neither to seek nor destroy', hence his philosophy does not reach any ultimate conclusions. Kabir is essentially robust and down to earth in his beliefs, and even in his flights of poetic imagination, he does not lose touch with reality. He eulogises the ordinary existence of a house-holder, for it is not the life but the dignity you bring to it that matters. His approach to God is direct and full of warmth. Although he stresses the many distracting temptations of this noisy world, he maintains that happiness can be

[1] *One hundred poems of Kabir*, translated by Tagore, verse II. 20. p. 26.

[2] *Ibid*, I. 107, p. 54.

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found within this world, and joy springs from the humblest of hearts. His own words are a testimony of his optimism :

> 'Lamps burn in every heart, O blind one and you cannot see them.
> One day your eyes will suddenly open and you shall see : and the fetters of death will fall from you.' [3]

Beejak is an encyclopaedia of Kabir's thoughts, the most important and fully representative of his books. The title means a 'seed', and suggests its hidden treasure, and also indicates the potential wealth that lies buried in all human hearts like a seed, that must be nurtured before it can bloom into a fragrant and fruit-bearing tree. This book he says is only for sincere seekers, and requests that his teachings should not be discussed before those who come to scoff.

The book naturally falls into three poetic sections, namely, Ramaini, Sabad and Sakhi. These poetic divisions were not the creation of Kabirdas, but form part of the heritage handed down to him through the Santa Kavya. We shall deal with each section individually before commenting on the whole book.

Ramaini

In the first section called Ramaini, comprising of 84 songs, Kabir gives us a description of the origin and evolution of nature, and deals at length with the many-sided sport of the soul. Kabir is here an intellectual and metaphysician. The long descriptions of nature are perhaps by way of a preface to the request not to despise it, for that would be equivalent to slighting the Creator Himself. He goes further to give a comprehensive account of the multitude of distracting desires that bewilder man. 'Like a monkey the individual soul prances from tree to tree, till an endless span of time.' Worldly riches are futile and warns us not to mistake the glamour and glitter of a dream for truth. Those on the path of righteousness are the genuine seekers, and he promises that they will be saved from disaster ; but those engaged ceaselessly in a whirl of outward activities, with an absence of inner life, are doomed never to find Bhakti. Contentment is not to be found in an effort to fulfil desires, for the thirst is unquenchable, and it is the easiest thing in the world to lose one's perspective and forget the ultimate goal of existence. On the other hand, the exuberance that fills the hearts of the meditative few — is a joy denied even to the mighty god Indra. There is no need for outward symbols and traditional worship, as truth lies in your own heart. He says :

> 'I am neither in Kaaba nor in Kailash :
> Neither am I in rites and ceremonies nor in yoga and renunciation.' [4]

Maya or illusion being the vilest evil in the world calls for an elaborate description from Kabir, of how the human soul is consumed and a net of forgetfulness is cast over the universe by this binding power. Beware of this bewitchingly alluring but fatally deceptive Maya, whom he personifies as a woman. She has caused the downfall of many sages through her charm. She is positively irresistible, and as long as man is engaged in the pleasure of his senses his mind and ego are alive, and the play of Maya seems a reality to him.

Sabad (Sabda)

Here Kabir turns from metaphysical analysis to sing songs born of mystical experiences and self-realization. Kabir is not only a philosopher but a poet and out of the fullness of his heart he sings rapturous songs of love and adoration. The verses of Sabad are not to enlighten anyone, but merely for self-expression.

The overwhelming problems of the universe, dealt with in the previous section, lose their complexity and are resolved into a very simple solution — the Guru. For he is the only individual able to guide us on the right path ; therefore devotion and loyalty to the Guru should be paramount over other virtues. The status of the teacher is naturally very high, but Kabir cautions us of false teachers. Blind

[3] *Ibid*, II. 33. p. 28.

[4] *Ibid*, I. 13, p. 1.

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faith, unfortunately a common failing, is dangerous and one should be guarded against. A social and religious reformer, he condemns social evils like untouchability, and the caste-system, and is appalled the way petty differences in religions are magnified and misinterpreted. This false chasm between different faiths is ridiculous, for everywhere there is yearning for the same God. Unity with the One is the state of supreme bliss, and Kabir is like a bride waiting for her groom. He also describes in inimitable language, the regal splendour and the music of the heavens. It is the subjectivity and sincerity of the simplest truths expressed by the poet, that touch the innermost chords of our heart.

Sakhi

The last section is the shortest consisting of 350 couplets, each a vehicle of a single, terse and cryptic thought. The bhajans or hymns in the previous section were the poetic enlargements of these ideas, which form the quintessence of all his teachings. The word 'sakhi' is the corrupt form of 'sakshi' or witness. Here Kabir as a spectator comments on many facets of life — the transitoriness of the world, shortness of human life and fickleness of human emotions. He is basically didactic here, though these couplets are not devoid of poetic beauty. They usually have a dual meaning, the obvious in terms of mundane existence, but the subtler meaning carries with it a message of profound depth and significance. These couplets have penetrated the everyday language of the common man and are like proverbs to him.

In Beejak Kabir is not only the pure Bhakta, but a debator, social reformer, diplomat, a man endowed with humour, and insight into human nature. To think that he achieved all this, and more, without the foundation of formal education, seems a miracle! Kabirdas was illiterate and admitted that he had never held a pen in his hand. Like all great souls Kabir was very humble and self-effacing, and hardly mentions anything regarding his personal life in his large humanitarian work.

Kabir's language was colloquial and although a number of words from other regional languages form part of his vocabulary, it is closest to Poorvi Hindi. Far from being chaste or polished his language is not bound by the strict rules of grammar, and the rhetoric of his works is spontaneous and not the outcome of calculated art.

A richly varied imagery enhances the poetry of Kabir, sometimes soaked in Sufism, at other times derived from Hindu mythology and very often homely and familiar symbols are used to express himself. Simple, sensuous and often inaccurate, his imagery appeals to the common man. With metaphors of humble things and worldly relationships he drives home his point, and is able to bring philosophy to the hearth and home of the average man. A great deal has been said by students of Kabir on his vast use of symbolism. Ram does not mean the son of Dasaratha, but consciousness. The mind is called a fish and youth; day and night stand for the human body. This adds to the poetic value and helps in bringing philosophy to the level of the common man.

Kabir's verses fall into several tunes or melodies, but they cannot all be sung or classified in ragas. He conceives of everything in terms of music.

> 'Creation he says again and again is full of music: it is music, at the heart of the Universe . . . The body of man is a lyre on which Brahma, "the source of all music", plays. Everywhere Kabir discerns the "unstruck music of the infinite".'[5]

Here are snatches from the haunting music of one of his songs:

> Dance my heart! dance today with joy
> The strains of love fill the days and the nights with music, and the world is listening to its melodies.
>
> Mad with joy, life and death dance to the rhythm of his music. The hills and the sea and the earth dance. The world of man dances in laughter and tears.[6]

[5] *Ibid*, Introduction by Evelyn Underhill. pp. xxxiv-xxxv.

[6] *Ibid*, II. 103, pp. 38-39.

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Poetry and music meet philosophy to produce a wealth of mystic literature in the Beejak. An unhalting inspiration, spontaneity, music and devotionalism, balanced with a metaphysical and an intellectual approach has created a literature of value and beauty. This has been well described by Evelyn Underhill in the following words :

> 'All the fluctuations of the mystic's emotions : the ecstacy, the despair, the still beatitude, the eager self-devotion, the flashes of illumination, and the moments of intimate love,'[7]

are all mirrored in the songs of Kabir.

[7] *Ibid*, Introduction, pp. xxxix-xl.

SOME NOTES ON PLATES

R. NAGASWAMI

1. SRIVILLIPUTTUR TEMPLE TOWER ON THE COVER : Srivilliputtur, which is so intimately connected with the life of the great Vaishnavite devotee, Andal is notable for a gopuram which is two hundred feet high and is the tallest tower in South India. The tower being built mainly by brick and plaster, is in thirteen stories exclusive of the superstructure forming its roof. The concave contours of the gopura, add to the sweeping effect of height and grace. The Nayaks of Madurai were great temple builders during 16th and 17th centuries to which period, this tower belongs. The other notable towers of the same type are to be seen at Meenakshi temple at Madurai. It is at this Srivilliputtur temple Andal is said to have worshipped Lord Vishnu.

2. RAMA WITH SITA AND LAKSHMANA : When compared to the influence of Ramayana over the mind of Indian people, the representation in sculptures of Ramayana panels, is very rare, which is still a puzzling phenomenon. The Dasavatara temple at Deogarh which is ascribed to 5th century A.D. to the period of the Guptas, contains some Ramayana panels. There are not many sculptures at Ellora where representation of Siva and Vishnu is profound. In South India very few Ramayana panels are seen upto about 13th century A.D. It is only after the advent of Vijayanagar Kings by about 1350 A.D., Ramayana panels were profusely carved in South India of which the Hasara Rama temple at Vijayanagar, which was the family temple of Krishnadevaraya is the most famous and contains some very good sculptures. Ramaswami temple at Kumbakonam also contains some good examples of Ramayana scenes. The same is the case with the bronze figures also, though some very good specimen of 10th and 11th century bronzes have survived. Only one theme is represented in bronzes where Rama is depicted in the pose of holding bow and arrow accompanied by Lakshmana, Sita and Hanuman.[1] Though Rama is an incarnation of Vishnu He is represented with two hands only. The figure here was unearthed at Vadakkupanaiour Village, Tanjore district and is the finest representation of Rama-group in the whole of South India and is now housed at National Art Gallery, Madras and is ascribed to 10th century A.D.

3. DURGA MAHISHAMARDINI : The Mahishamardini panel presented here is taken from the Mahabalipuram architecture which belongs to 8th century A.D. during the reign of the Pallava King Mahendravarman. The Pauranic story behind this has been supplied by the Devi Mahatmyam where the Mother Goddess Durga kills the demon King Mahishasura who took the form of a buffalo. This theme is very

[1] वामे भूमिसुता पुरश्च हनुमान् पश्चात् सुमित्रासुतः ।

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popular and has been variousiy represented with Durga alone or in a group killing the Asura.

4. VENUGOPALA : Krishna as Venugopala is a fascinating theme for the Vaishnavite devotees and is represented as a youth playing upon flute and accompanied by his consorts, Rukmini and Satyabhama. The whole of Jayadeva's immortal Gita Govinda has for its central theme, the sports of Krishna with Gopis. The most profound expression of this theme in bronze is found in Venugopala figures. Venugopala with consorts represented here was unearthed at Chimakurti Village, Guntur District and is ascribed to 9th century A.D. The slender and elongated figures recall to our mind, sculptural masterpieces of Amaravati of 150 A.D. The Bronzes are now in the Madras Museum.

5. BUDDHA : In scriptures, Buddha was represented in human form, only after about 500 years of his Parinirvana. During the early phase, Buddhism was not in favour of representing the master in human form, for it was considered to be a sin to make the likeness of the great Buddha. During the first three centuries before Christ, we see only symbolic representation of Buddha ; thus a Dharmachakra over a Bhadrasana flanked by devotees, represents Dharmachakra pravartana or the setting the wheel of law into motion by the master ; a Stupa represents the Parinirvana of the master ; a tree over a Vyaghrasana represents the attainment of knowledge under the Bodhi tree ; a purnaghata represents the birth of the master. Thus some important events in the life of the master found favour in sculptures. When the master was represented in human form he was conceived of as a great Yogi and was usually represented as seated with his palms held in any one of the poses viz. Dharmachakra pravartana Mudra, Dhyanamudra, Abhaya Mudra or Bhumisparsamudra. The figure here represents Buddha in Bhumisparsamudra where he is shown as seated in Padmasana with the left arm over his lap and the right arm touching the earth. When Buddha sat under the Bodhi tree, Mara the Satan of Buddhism, challenged Buddha's attainment for which the Lord silently touched the mother earth and prevailed upon her, who stood witness. On seeing this Mara and his retinue fled. This scene is often repeated in South Indian Sculptures. Buddhism was a prevalent faith in the South till 15th century A.D. The Kalyani inscription of 1461 refers to Nagapattinam where a monastery was in its full glory during that period. The larger and smaller Leyden copper plates speak of Raja Raja Perumpalli and Rajendra Perumpalli which are Buddhist monasteries built by the side of the great Chudamani Vihara. Chudamani Vihara was built by the Srivishaya (Sumatra) king, Sri Mara Vijayothunga Varman after his father's name Chudamani Varman. The great Chola emperors, though great Saivites, donated lands and wealth to this vihara. Nagapattinam has yielded a number of bronze figures of Buddha with inscription among which many are represented in Bhusparsamudra.

6. SRIRANGAM TEMPLE TOWER : Srirangam as the abode of Sri Ranganatha, could be traced as far back as the epic period, for in Ramayana Sri Ranganatha is said to be the family deity of Ikshvaku kings. Rama before leaving His abode on earth to His own place in Vaikunthaloka, advised Vibhishana to reign over His subjects with Dharma and to worship constantly the family deity of Ikshvaku kings, already presented to Him.[2]

From Padma Purana it is learnt that the family deity of Ikshvaku kings, is none other than Sri Ranganatha.[3] It is also learned from

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[2] प्रजाः संरक्ष धर्मेण नोत्तरं वक्तुमर्हसि
किंचान्यत्वक्तुमिच्छामि राक्षसेन्द्र महामते ।
आराधय जगन्नाथं इक्ष्वाकुकुलदैवतम्
आराधनीयमनिशं सर्वैर्देवैस्सवासवैः ॥

[3] तावद्रमस्व राज्यस्थः काले मम पदं व्रज
इत्युक्त्वा प्रददौ तस्मै सविश्लेषासहिष्णवे ।
श्रीरंगशायिनं स्वामिं इक्ष्वाकुकुलदैवतम्
रामं विमानमादाय लंकां प्रायाद्विभीषणः ॥

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Paramartha Samhita, that the deity at Srirangam was the one left by Vibhishana at the site, on his return journey to Ceylon, after a holy bath at Chandrapushkarini. This temple is one of the most venerated and beautiful temples of the South, as it stands today, recording a continuous temple building activity down upto 18th century, when the magnificent southern gopura and the other gopuras of the same enclosures were abruptly stopped, due to Anglo-French war. The date of the garbha griha, the sanctum sanctorum is not definitely known and is unusually circular in plan. The other circular shrines being very rare, are the Vijayalaya Choleswaram of Nortamalai, Jwaraheswara temple of Kanchipuram and Tiruvotriyur temple, which belong to the early Chola period. This Shrine may also be ascribed to the early Chola period. Circular shrines are not very common in South India. The early Chola king Aditya who reigned during the ninth century A.D. is said to have studded the banks of River Kaveri with thousands of temples. Thirteen gateways are to be seen in straight line in Srirangam running from the north to south, the southernmost gopura being the most impressive of all in its dimension and beauty. It was abruptly stopped during 18th century and if it would have been finished it would be the tallest and finest gopura of South India rising to a height of at least three hundred feet as could be seen from the high entrance and width of the base. The horse court, and the Venugopala shrine inside the enclosures, contain elegant and intricate sculptures. The greatest of Pandyan rulers, Sundara Pandya, who was coronated in about 1251 A.D. made enormous gifts and covered the Vimana with gold for which act of piety he held the title of Hemachchadana Raya. But this imperial monarch who held sway over the entire southern land, failed to install his likeness in the temple, for the temple authorities refused to place any mortal's likeness, and was content by installing a deity after his own name.

7. VISHNU AS SRINIVASA : Vishnu is generally represented in different forms, but the figure of Srinivāsa, Varadarāja and Ranganātha are most common in South Indian temples. These representations are seen at Tirupati, Kanchipuram and Srirangam respectively, and in similar representation at other places also Vishnu is known by the same name. The upper pair of arms in all Vishnu figures hold His usual emblems (Sankha) the Conch and (Chakra) the Discus which bear the names of Pānchajanya and Sudarsana respectively. The lower pair of arms are held in various poses (Mudras) by which one figure is distinguished from the other. Thus when the right arm is in Abhaya pose and the left holds Gadā, He is known as Vishnu ; when the lower right is in Abhaya pose and the left in the pose of holding the thigh, He is called Srinivasa ; when the right is in the boon-bestowing attitude called Varada, He is called Varadaraja ; as sleeping on Serpent Couch He is called Ranganatha. He is accompanied by His consorts, Sridevi and Bhudevi. Sridevi is always on the right of Vishnu, holding a lotus bud in her left arm and Bhudevi is seen in the left holding a lilly on her right arm. Sridevi could be distinguished by the Kuchabandha (breast band) also. Vishnu images are always shown as wearing kirita makuta (Crown) while Siva is shown with Jata makuta (matted hair). By holding his thigh, with his left arm Srinivasa shows that the realm of mundane activity (Samsara) is only thigh deep for his devotees. This figure representing Vishnu as Srinivasa was unearthed at Srinivasanallur Village, Trichy District. The figure is ascribed to the later Chola period of 12th century A.D. and is now in the Government Museum, Madras.

8. SIVA AS VISHAPAHARANA : When Devas and Asuras churned the Milky ocean in order to cream out the ambrosia, they made use of the serpent Vasuki as rope to churn the mountain Manthara. 'Unable to bear the strain the serpent vomitted the deadly poison Halahala which would consume the whole universe if left out. Hence came forth Siva and drank the deadliest of poison to cure the

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world of its perilous disaster, for Siva is spoken of as the physician of physicians.'[4] Siva in the act of removing the poison of the snake and holding it to swallow is called Vishapaharana. This form is not very commonly represented. The figure here represents this theme, where Siva is seated as a great yogi, poised in elegant majesty, holding the serpent in left lower arm, while the upper arms hold axe and antelope. The figure is one of the early bronze of South India dating about 800 A.D. and is considered to be a Pallava bronze for the Pallava characteristics are clearly discernible in the figure. It is interesting to note here that Pallava bronzes are very rare for it is only with the advent of the Cholas, that the art of bronze-casting in South India became prolific.

9. SIVA AS NATARAJA : Worship of Siva could be traced as far back as 3000 B.C. and it is accepted that some form of Siva, as Pasupati worship was in vogue even during the Indus civilisation, which was brought to light by the excavation at Mohanjodaro and Harappa. Amongst various finds at these sites, a significant seal represents Siva, seated on a pedestal, wearing a peculiar crown and surrounded by animals like tiger, rhinoceros, bull, etc. In subsequent period a number of hymns were addressed to Siva as Rudra. In South India Saivism is widely spread from a very early period and in one of the Tamil hymns Siva is addressed as 'the Lord of South'.[5] In earlier phases of South Indian art, Siva is represented with trident, his significant emblem, which could be seen even to this day in northern part of India. But from about 800 A.D. Siva holds only the antelope (Mṛga) and axe (Parasu) as His emblems. Siva is worshipped both in his Sattvic (Peaceful) and Tamasic (Terrific) aspects. Various mythological stories are connected with various representations and some such representations are purely South Indian in origin and extant. The most important of such a theme is Siva as Nataraja, the Cosmic dancer. It may be said with a pardonable pride, that the greatest contribution of South India to the world is the theme of Nataraja which is at once fascinating and illuminating to all the scholars of the world, for it is verily the cosmic dance of Matter and Energy personified as the master-dancer. The great Lord of Lords, when he wants to create the world touches Prakriti who is represented as the flaming circular disc (Tiruvaśi) around him and sportively dances, energising her also to dance. Then the cosmos vibrates, creations emanate from the sound of his little drum (Damaru) ; destruction proceeds from the fire of his left arm ; the lower right arm protects the devotee and the left points to the lifted pada which is the solace of the humanity ; the ahamkara of the devotee is quelled by the right leg crushing the Apasmara. Thus a wave of five activities known as Panchakriya, Srishti, Sthiti, Samhara, Anugraha and Tirobhava, is set in motion. His jatas, his arms, legs, uttariya, the flames and everything around him whirl in rhythmic motion to the accompaniment of divine music and yet amongst such cosmic dance there is absolute and unperturbed balance which at once recalls to our mind the Vedic hymn of creation : 'There was neither light nor darkness at the beginning.'[6] The Tiruvasi or aureole around the Lord represents the heart of the devotee, which is laid waste by burning the ego to ashes and there dances Siva His mystic dance and hence bears the name Sudalai ādi. The representation of Nataraja is too well known to be repeated here. It would suffice to state that this representation is religion, philosophy and science in one theme. The Nataraja from Velanganni Village, Tanjore District which is represented here is ascribed to the early Chola period of 11th century A.D. It is now preserved in the Madras Museum and is considered to be the second best by Rodin, the French sculptor. The Nataraja from Tiruvalangadu, now housed at

[4] भिषक्तमं त्वा भिषजां शृणोमि ।

[5] தென்னுடைய சிவனே போற்றி

[6] नासदासीत् नसदासीत् ।

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the National Art Gallery, Madras, is the first and best creation of art in the world. Siva is said to have performed this mystic dance at Chidambaram in order to please His devotee Adisesha. This form which invariably finds a place in all the Saivite temples of South India, is not represented anywhere in North India, though other dancing forms of Siva are often seen.

10. SAINT MANICKAVACHAKAR : Arurar as he is otherwise known, Manickavachakar is one of the four great Saivite saints represented in bronzes, in all the Saivite temples of South India. His most melodious and lyrical compositions, addressed to Siva are called Tiruvachakam. He is represented as standing, holding a palm leaf manuscript with his left hand which either bears the Panchakshara, 'Namasivaya' or the first line of his Tiruvachakam. His right arm is in Vyakhyana pose and the hair is usually treated with curls or as kesamandala, his neck is adorned with rudraksha, and a small cloth is tied around his waist. It may be noted here, that the entire Tevaram and Tiruvachaka hymns of those four Saivite saints, were engraved in copper plates and deposited in the Chidambaram temple, during 12th century A.D. which are lost.

11. SUBRAHMANYA : In northern part of India Subrahmanya is principally known as Kartikeya and is not so often represented in sculptures as in South India, where He is considered to be the greatest of gods, and is known as the Lord of Tamil language. From time immemorial He was worshipped in Tamil country as could be learned from Sangam literature, amongst which one complete work, Thirumurugarrupadai is dedicated to Him. In sculptures, the earliest representation is seen at Mahabalipuram where in one shrine of the Tirumurti cave, He is represented as standing in Samabhanga Posture, holding some indistinct emblems. His Vehicle, peacock, with which He is invariably associated in later sculptures, is not noticed here. Slightly later than the Mahabalipuram sculpture, He is profusely represented as a little dancing child, in between His parents, in Somaskanda panels, which are seen at the back wall of the main shrine of Siva temples, built during the period of Rajasimha. In one of the Chola sculptures, the cock and peacock are represented as His standards. From about 1100 A.D. onwards conventional representation creeps in, and we come across Subrahmanya represented either as Shanmukha (with six faces) or as standing or riding His vehicle peacock, with His consorts Valli and Devasena or as Palani Andavar. The figure here represents Subrahmanya as seated on His vehicle, with His emblems Vajra and Sakti. Here the lord is not represented with six heads, which is quite commonly seen in similar representations of later periods. The figure coming from Tanjore District is an early Chola type of bronze, of 11th century A.D. and is now in the Madras Museum.

Among the Jews, idol-worship is condemned, but they had a temple in which was kept a chest which they called an ark, in which the Tables of the Law were preserved, and above the chest were two figures of angels with wings outstretched, between which the Divine Presence was supposed to manifest itself as a cloud. That temple has long since been destroyed but the new temples are made exactly after the old fashion, and in the chest religious books are kept. The Roman Catholics and Greek Christians have idol-worship in certain forms. The image of Jesus and that of his mother are worshipped. Among the Protestants there is no idol-worship, yet they worship God in a personal form, which may be called idol-worship in another form. Among Parsees and Iranians fire worship is carried on to a great extent. Among the Mohammedans the Prophets and great and noble persons are worshipped, and they turn their faces towards the Kaaba when they pray. These things show that men at the first stage of religious development have to make use of something external, and when the inner self becomes purified they turn to more abstract conceptions. . . . So we should not speak ill of a man who worships idols.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

The selection for the serial on the first page has been made by Sister Savitri, a German devotee.

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Nijaguna Shivayogi : Dr Prabhushankara, M.A., D.Phil., is lecturer, Maharaja's College, Mysore.

Ramacharitamanasa : Srimati Chandra Kumari Handoo's article forms the introduction of a chapter of her forthcoming book on Tulasidas.

Vichar Sagar : Sri Ramlal is Assistant Editor, *Kalyan.*

Sursagar : Sri T. S. Raghavan, M.A., is from Madras.

Bijak : Miss Nonika Handoo is from Bombay.

Some Notes on the plates : Sri R. Nagaswami is Archaeological Curator of the Madras Museum. We are indebted to the Superintendent, Government Museum for allowing us to make use of some of the blocks and photographs of the Museum for illustration.

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REVIEWS AND NOTICES

WHAT VEDANTA MEANS TO ME: A symposium. (Vedanta Society of Southern California). Pub: Doubleday & Co. Garden city, New York. Pages 215. Price $ 3.95; and also Rider & Company, London, W. 1., Pp. 176, Price 21 s.

In India we are apt to take many things for granted. There are certain truths, and attitudes based upon them, forming part of our spiritual and religious tradition which leaven our life in a manner we are not normally conscious. The fundamental teachings of the Vedanta, for instance, are woven in one way or the other in the life of the race for millenniums and give an ennobling value to our existence and meaning for our effort. This very naturalness of the heritage has somewhat blunted our awareness of its full significance.

Such were our thoughts on reading this excellent symposium on *What Vedanta means to me* under the auspices of the Vedanta Society. Here are frank, searching and elevating statements from sixteen individuals (men and women) in the West—some of them distinguished in different walks of life e.g. Gerald Heard, Christopher Isherwood, Aldous Huxley, John Van Druten, — who awoke to the problem of life but found little or no help from the organised systems of religion in which they were born. Their accounts of repeated trials and disappointments in varied quarters of new experiments, and the solace to soul and peace to mind they received, and continue to receive, from the philosophy and sadhana of the Vedanta popularised by the mighty saint of Dakshineshwar and propagated by his illustrious Voice — Vivekananda, are documents of lasting spiritual value. Some of the contributions, explaining how the Vedantic Truths of Atman, essential divinity of man, karma, reincarnation etc. fill the gaping hiatus that faces the awakened man in the West, are eye-openers to those who tend to relegate these living concepts to the realm of philosophy and mysticism away from practical life.

Incidentally there is in these pages a happy undercurrent of gratitude to the members of the Sri Ramakrishna Order for the lofty idealism and unsparing effort that have consistently characterised their work everywhere. The tributes to Swami Prabhavananda are deservedly rich and heart-warming.

M. P. PANDIT.

YOGA: *A Scientific Evaluation.* By Kovoor T. Behanan, Ph.D. Pp. 270. Dover Publications, INC. New York. Price $ 1.65.

This is a reprint of a publication which appeared more than twenty years ago. As its title suggests, this book attempts at a scientific evaluation of Hindu Yoga System and the author, an American trained Keralite, had prepared himself thoroughly to write on the subject, by himself undergoing the prescribed Yogic training, and mastering in addition the entire gamut of Hindu philosophy. In truth, yoga is but a part of Hindu philosophy, which in turn is an amalgam of philosophic thought, psycho-analysis and psychic research. It is a complement to the six darsanas; and its series of physical and mental exercises, offer a practical method to realise the Atman (p. 27), and possibly the only medium to liberate the human soul from the bondage of worldly entanglements (p. 63), insisting on effort rather than on knowledge.

Chapters II and III give a historical account of the evolution of the Samkhya school in Indian Philosophy, which has given rise to the theories of modern psychology with its approach through scientific experimentation *sans soul.*

The Chapter VII on "Rebirth" is well conceived and presents the Hindu conception from an altogether novel though essentially sound perspective.

Yogic exercises are dealt with in Chapters X and XI. These, the author maintains, have a definite physiological and psychological value, for, in truth, as William James has said, 'they wake up deeper and deeper levels of will and moral and intellectual power'. The author himself is able to vouch though at times he is a little too pessimistic (p. 232,) that the graduated series of exercises offer a practical way of achieving emotional stability. Unlike the other systems which emphasise on change in attitude but fail to offer a practical way of achieving it, the yogic theory succeeds in developing a healthy emotional equilibrium and that, the author avers, is empirically verifiable (p. 246).

Altogether, an invaluable book which is indispensable to all aspirants and scholars who would like to study and practise the Hindu Yoga Sastra, as well as to those who would plan to initiate the much needed researches into the subject.

S. RAJAGOPALAN

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SWAMI AGAMANANDA PASSES AWAY

We are sorry to announce the sudden passing away of Swami Agamananda, President, Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, Kaladi, at 4-10 p.m. on 17th April 1961, in a nursing home in Perumbavoor, at the age of 64. A few days earlier he had a heart attack and was improving. He was conscious till the last asking the Swami present there to repeat the name of the Lord. After an hour his body was taken to Kaladi. More than five thousand people, on hearing the news, gathered in a two-mile long queue, singing bhajana. At the Ashrama the whole night was spent in namasankirtana. Hundreds of people came on hearing the news on the Radio to pay their homage. Next day at 9-30 a.m. the body was consigned to the flames. Complete hartal was observed for two days in the area.

Swami Agamananda was born on 27th August 1896, in a Nambiadri family at Chavara in Quilon district. His pre-monastic name was Krishnan. In earlier days he studied Ayurveda, Jyotisha and other shastras. He lost his parents early in life and was looked after by his uncle who sent him to the English school. Higher studies he had, with several breaks due to ill-health, in Trivandrum and Madras and ultimately took his M.A. degree in Sanskrit.

Even as a boy Krishnan had a missionary spirit and used to teach Gita, Upanishads and other shastras to other people and established a society named 'Sanatanadharma Vidyarthi Sangham'. He was married early in life but before the consummation the call of Sannyasa came. He met Swami Nirmalanandaji in 1913 and Swami Brahmanandaji in 1916-17 and was initiated by the latter in Quilon.

Even as a boy he studied all the works of Shankara which in later days he began to translate into Malayalam. In between his studies and afterwards, he worked as a teacher for a short time and then joined the Ottapalam Ashrama. He was initiated into Sannyasa by Nirmalanandaji in 1928. The following year he started an Ashrama at Pudukad. After three years' stay there he went to the Belur Math and met other direct disciples of the Master. For a few years he studied the shastras in Banaras. He was in Madras for sometime and then in 1936 started the Ashrama at Kaladi, the birth-place of Sri Shankara, where he started a chain of institutions. A Degree College bearing the name of the Acharya, not affiliated to the Mission, was also started by him. He travelled like a whirl-wind throughout Kerala, giving lectures and discourses about the Sanatana Dharma and created a stir. After his passing away many notable men of Kerala paid their tributes to him giving him the credit of being a great force in the revival of Hinduism, creation of a passion for service and checking of Christian conversion in that area. All the newspapers of Kerala prominently came out with editorials etc. to express the great loss sustained by the State by his demise. This shows the amount of love and respect he commanded from those with whom he came in contact. He was well-known for his oratory, scholarship, work for Harijans, as well as for his unassuming behaviour and burning sympathy and missionary zeal. May his soul rest in Peace!

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA SARADA MISSION

Vivekananda Vidya Bhavan

An inaugural meeting of the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission for a proposed full-fledged Degree College for women was held on Friday, the 10th March, at its newly acquired premises at 33, Nayapatty Road, South Dum Dum, Calcutta 28.

Swami Madhavanandaji, General Secretary, Ramakrishna Math & Mission was the President and Dr D. M. Sen, Education Secretary, Govt. of West Bengal was present as the chief guest. A large number of ladies and gentlemen and many Senior monks of Ramakrishna Math and Mission were present.

After the chanting of Vedic mantras, Pravrajika Muktiprana, General Secretary of the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission in a brief address said that Swami Vivekananda, after whom the College was to be named, had said more than once that if India is to raise herself, it is only through

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Education. Real education is that which builds character and leads to self realisation. It is necessary that both men and women should be educated. For decades now, the Ramakrishna mission has tried to work out Swamiji's ideals among men. Swamiji himself had a Girls' School opened by his worthy disciple Sister Nivedita. Many girls' Schools since then have been started and run by the Ramakrishna Mission in all parts of India. Inspired by Swami Vivekananda's idealism, many women have gradually come forward, to take the vows of Renunciation and Service. With the increase in their number, the Ramakrishna Math and Mission decided to start an independent Math for them which would be run by themselves. With this end in view, in 1954, the Sarada Math was opened. In the month of May in 1960, the trustees of the Sarada Math, under the guidance of the Ramakrishna Mission, formed the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission to carry on work. Immediately, a proposal for opening a College for girls was made to them. For that purpose, Sri Devendra Nath Bhattacharya of Dum Dum most unexpectedly offered a gift of 33 Bighas of land with a building. From July this year the Three Years' Degree Course College will be opened. It will also have the Pre-University course. The plan is to make it a residential college, but at present day-scholars may have to be taken. This Institution will be fashioned after the ancient Gurukula System with a scientific outlook suited to the needs of the modern times.

The Pravrajika also spoke of the need of about Rs. 14 lakhs and appealed to the Government and the generous public to help them.

Mr Ashok Sarkar, Managing Director, the *Ananda Bazar Patrika* and the *Hindustan Standard*, said that Swami Vivekananda wanted to see the women of the country come forward to solve their own problems and be courageous and brave. The establishment of Sri Sarada Math was, in part, a fulfilment of his dream. He wished the Institution all success and said that the Government and the public should come forward to help the organizers.

Speaking next, Dr Roma Choudhury, Principal, Lady Brabourne College, said that the political bondage of more than a century had brought about a total physical and mental ruin of our people. Therefore we have to face enormous educational problems. All educationists are thinking about our problems, but cannot find any solution. For this purpose are we to turn to the foreign countries with a begging bowl? Have we no ideals and methods of our own? Then she dwelt in detail upon the ancient ideals of education and in the end expressed her hopes that the idealism, devotion and sincerity of the dedicated workers of the newly started Ramakrishna Sarada Mission would help in imparting right education.

The Education Secretary of the West Bengal Government, Dr D. M. Sen, agreed that the educational problems that they had to face were many and they have been striving to find out a solution. Speaking about the essential need of Indian Unity, he said, the education that was given was narrow and limited. For instance, education given in Bengal created a Bengalee, that in Punjab — a Punjabi, and that in Madras — a Madrasi. Had a person to be born outside India, to become an Indian?

In this context he praised the Sannyasins of the Ramakrishna Mission for breaking the narrow limits of provincialism, and serving the whole country, keeping before their minds the noble ideals of unity and equality. All the streams of Indian culture, he said, met in the Ramakrishna Mission, where without any distinction everyone was accepted.

He expressed the hope that the newly found Ramakrishna Sarada Mission would follow in the path of the Ramakrishna Mission by striving to enlighten the women of our country.

In his presidential speech Swami Madhavanandaji said: I have not come here to make a speech. I have only come to participate in the inauguration of a good work and be blessed. Swami Vivekanandaji Maharaj desired that women should work out their own problems. He wished to establish a Math for women like the one he had started for men at Belur. He had left instructions with us that till women were competent to shoulder the responsibility of such an organization, we should help them from a distance. If women work under the directions of men it so happens that men try to control them and they cannot work in freedom. So he wanted that women by themselves should run their Math and men should not interfere in its management.

It gives us great joy that in 1954, during the Holy Mother's Centenary, we were able to start a Math — Sri Sarada Math — for women and that gradually we were able to hand over all responsibilities to them. This Math is the counterpart of the Belur Math. Just as the Belur Math is for men so is this Sarada Math for women.

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As with the Belur Math we have the Ramakrishna Mission attached to it to carry on humanitarian and social welfare work, so also attached to the Sarada Math is the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission with the same objects in view. For, all this work done in a spirit of worship is an aid to Self-Realisation. Like the Ramakrishna Mission, this Mission also will carry on humanitarian work. They will not however be able to undertake all the activities of the Ramakrishna Mission, for their field of work will be limited among women and children.

That the blessings of Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother are on this Mission which bears their names can be understood very well. For, immediately after the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission was registered last year, a generous resident of Dum Dum Mr. Devendra Nath Bhattacharya came forward most unexpectedly to offer a gift of this land and building to them for starting a residential College for women. They are starting with a Degree College — and this has been possible only on account of their grace.

Our Vidyamandir at Belur was started in 1941. For nearly twenty years it was an Intermediate College and only last year it was converted into a Degree College. But we are happy to know that these people are starting with a Degree College. Today, though it is a working day, many of you have assembled here to encourage them in their new endeavour. It shows which way the wind is blowing. I pray that Swamiji's dream be fulfilled through them.

Many of our friends may think that we have shirked responsibility by giving them legally an independent status. But that is not true. It will also not be correct to say that they wished to be independent. Rather they would have been glad to continue the previous status. The separate organization has been formed according to Swamiji's wish.

He wanted that women should carry on work independently and that we should only help them from a distance. So it was according to our advice that they started the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission. This Mission, though legally separate, is basically one with the Ramakrishna Mission, being its counterpart. May they be able to efficiently conduct the Sarada Math and the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission, guided by their intelligence, is my earnest prayer to Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother.

Immediately after forming the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission, they have undertaken this work, which shows that they do not wish to sit quietly at the Sarada Math and strive after personal salvation only, but wish to come out and do active work for the welfare of humanity in a spirit of worship.

They are all highly qualified and capable of doing good work and they have feelings and good intentions. To the extent they will dedicate themselves wholeheartedly to the work of Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother to that extent their grace and blessings also will be on them. We ourselves feel surprised to see the great works that the Master, the Holy Mother and Swamiji have accomplished through us. We never dreamt of doing such things, but still we were forced to undertake such works in spite of ourselves. Similarly their blessings will be on these people and they will accomplish great things through them also. Their blessing is already on them, may it increase a thousandfold is my earnest prayer.

All these years the Ramakrishna Mission has enjoyed your regard, trust and help and I want that you will extend the same to these people also. They have renounced their homes and have dedicated their lives to the service of humanity. I appeal to you to see that they too get your help. If you come to know of any of their needs, I request you to remove such wants. We want to see that they excel the Ramakrishna Mission and that their work grows from day to day. May Sri Ramakrishna guide them. You all help them in their endeavours — this is my request to you all. The small seed that is sown today will in ten years grow into a big institution. Today we feel happy that we have been able to fulfil the responsibility that Swamiji had placed on us. As the blessings of the Master and the Holy Mother are on them, so will they be on all who will help them. You are householders and so cannot fully dedicate yourselves to social work, as you have responsibilities. But from your respective spheres of activity you can give them help. Thus, with mutual trust, their Mission will grow like the Ramakrishna Mission, and you all will be blessed by helping them and they too will be blessed by doing service to humanity.

On this auspicious day, I pray may this Vivekananda-Vidya Bhavan be prosperous in every way.

A vote of thanks was proposed by Pravrajika Shraddhaprana at the end.

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.... Be bold and face
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease.
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

THE VEDANTA KESARI

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FROM THE TREE OF DIVINE LORE

We look at It, and we do not see It, and we name It the 'Equable'.

We listen to It, and do not hear It, and we name It the 'Inaudible'.

We try to grasp It and do not get hold of It, and we name It the 'Subtle'. With these three qualities It cannot be made the subject of description; and hence we blend them together and obtain the *One*.

Its upper part is not bright, and Its lower part is not obscure. Ceaseless in Its actions, It yet cannot be named, and then, again It returns and becomes nothing. This is called the Form of the Formless, and the Semblance of the Invisible, this is called the Fleeting and Indeterminable.

We meet It, and do not see Its Front; we follow It, and do not see Its Back. When we can lay hold of the TAO of old to direct the things of the present day, we are able to know It as It was of old in the beginning; this is called (unwinding) the clue of the Tao.

The movement of the Tao by contraries proceeds;
And weakness marks the course of Tao's mighty deeds.
All things under heaven sprang from It as existing (and named);
That existence sprang from It as non-existent (and unnamed).

There was something undefined and complete coming into existence before heaven and earth. How still It was and formless, standing alone, undergoing no change, reaching everywhere and in no danger (of being exhausted). It may be regarded as the Mother of all things.

I do not know Its name, so I give It the designation of Tao. Making a further effort to give It a name, I call It The Great. Great It passes on (in constant flow). Passing on, It becomes remote. Having become remote, It returns.

I do not know whose son It is. It might appear to have been before God. Man takes his law from the Earth; Earth takes its law from Heaven; Heaven takes its law from the Tao. The law of the Tao is Its being what It is.

(Laotze: *'Tao Teh King'*)

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ADHYATMA RAMAYANA

यत्पादपंकजरजः श्रुतिभिर्विमृग्यं
यन्नाभिपंकजभवः कमलासनश्च ।
यन्नामसाररसिको भगवान् पुरारि-
स्तं रामचन्द्रमनिशं हृदि भावयामि ॥

I constantly meditate upon that Ramachandra, the dust of whose lotus feet the Vedas search for, from whose navel-lotus arose Brahma, and whose name is relished as the essential thing even by God Siva.
(I. 5. 47).

The Ramayana is a book of great influence. The story of Sri Rama in the Valmiki Ramayana in olden days had such an impact on Indian consciousness that in every Indian language several translations and adaptations were brought out. As a result of all these Ramayanas, there is hardly a boy or girl in India who does not know about the detachment and dutifulness of Rama, love of Sita, service of Lakshmana and Bharata, devotion of Hanuman and examples of many other noble qualities. The Ramayana in the local languages of course are naturally very popular, being accessible to the peasant as well as the learned. Down the centuries they have provided the Indians with the grand ethical and spiritual ideals. Most of the other Ramayanas have been greatly influenced by the *Adhyatma Ramayana* which was written in Sanskrit. As it has been recognized by writers on Tulsidas that his *Ramacharitamanasa* has derived much from the Adhyatma Ramayana, specially whenever it deviates from the Valmiki Ramayana. In fact it has more similarity with the former in approach and delineation of incidents than with the latter. The Adhyatma Ramayana is prevalent throughout India but is specially popular in the North among the followers of the path of jnana. It is widely read in the monastic circles too.

The Adhyatma Ramayana may be called a Bhagavata Ramayana. It deals with the character of Sri Rama more in tune with Srimad Bhagavata's dealing with the character of Sri Krishna. It is a remodelling of the Valmiki Ramayana, with the latter's beauty often retained but teachings made more explicit. The Valmiki Ramayana is like an ocean of literary beauty, ethical teachings and spiritual instructions but it requires deeper insight and good samskara to get at those truths. The human element, ethical quality and literary beauty are more predominant there. The Adhyatma Ramayana on the other hand gives the spiritual truth more explicitly. It is a lake with crystal clear water through which the gems below can be easily seen. Whereas in the Valmiki Ramayana the glory of Maya or Prakriti has been well presented, the Adhyatma Ramayana presents the glory of the Mayin or Paramatman.

In his Ramayana (Adi XV) Maharshi Valmiki says :

> 'Vishnu, who is the Paramatman and the whole, granted the aforesaid boon to the devas and thought about Himself as a man and his birthplace. And then the Bhagavan with lotus eyes willed to divide Himself into four parts and accept King Dasaratha as His father.' [1]

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[1] एवं दत्त्वा वरं देवो देवानां विष्णुरात्मवान् ।
मानुष्ये चिन्तयामास जन्मभूमिमथात्मनः ॥
ततः पद्मपलाशाक्षः कृत्वात्मानं चतुर्विधम् ।
पितरं रोचयामास तदा दशरथं नृपम् ॥

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So though Valmiki stresses on the human aspect of Sri Rama, he also recognises that he is Vishnu Himself. But how the propriety of this dual character is maintained in the character of Rama has been clearly explained in the Adhyatma Ramayana. Lord Siva has given the secret of Sri Rama's real nature in this holy book. By reading this, the grand truth of the avatara and his lila can be fully comprehended. It is a book stressing like the Bhagavata on jnana, vijnana, bhakti and vairagya. It has earned a name as a book more given to jnana because of its philosophical basis which is non-dualistic. But at the same time it retains all the grandeur of the bhakti system.

The important idea in the Ramayana is the grand detachment of Sri Rama. It is also there in the Valmiki Ramayana. But in the Adhyatma Ramayana it has been the guiding idea. Hence at every step we are reminded that Rama was Paramatman incarnate.[2] His love and affection, sorrows and sufferings are only external. These pairs of opposites cannot really touch him.[3] He *as if* plays his part as is clear from Kausalya's prayer in this book.[4] Often an expression is seen which says, 'But if we analyse we find that he did not do anything; for he is changeless and measureless.'[5] Not only Sri Rama but even his relatives and companions and also his acquaintances and enemies are aware or made aware of their real nature and they knowingly play the parts assigned to them. It is true that this fact takes away a little of the literary excellence which depends upon real feeling of sympathy. But the loss is made up by the spiritual gains of the realization of the avatarahood of Sri Rama. The idea is so predominant that even the meaning of the word 'Rama' has been given in this book in tune with this idea. It says :

> 'Rama is One in whom the Munis sport after the destruction of ignorance through knowledge or one who gives joy to the devotees by his beauty'.[6]

It is a general mistaken notion that the Adhyatma Ramayana is an allegorical treatment of the original. But the different characters are not presented in that way. It is true that several characters have been pointed out as different metaphysical entities, e.g. Rama as Paramatman, Sita as Prakriti or Yogamaya, Lakshmana as Jivatman. Basing himself on the philosophical ideas, the author reminds us and the characters too at every step that they are mere tools in the hand of God or Karma. Their part is only to become the so-called cause — *Nimittamatram* of the Gita. Like Arjuna they know their real nature but still act according to Divine Will. So we find that Ravana knows that he will be killed, Sita knows that she will be stolen. Still they do their functions as ordained.

The Adhyatma Ramayana again is very careful to remove some of the objections raised against the Valmiki Ramayana. As for example, the steal-

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[2] रामं विद्धि परं ब्रह्म सच्चिदानन्दमद्वयम् ।
सर्वोपाधिविनिर्मुक्तं सत्तामात्रगोचरम् ॥ (I. 1. 32.)

[3] विशुद्धविज्ञानघने रघूत्तमेऽविद्या कथं स्यात् परतः परात्मनि । (I. 1. 21.)

[4] करोषीव न कर्त्ता त्वं गच्छसीव न गच्छसि ।
न शृणोषि शृणोषीव पश्यसीव न पश्यसि ॥
(I. 3. 26.)

[5] अविकारी परिणामहीनो विचार्यमाणो न करोति किंचित् ॥ (I. 3. 71 or 66.)

[6] यस्मिन् रमन्ते मुनयो विद्यया ज्ञानविप्लवे ।
तं गुरुः प्राह रामेति रमणाद्राम इत्यपि ॥
(I. 3. 44 or 40.)

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ing of Sita. The Adhyatma Ramayana says that Rama informed Sita earlier that Ravana was coming and asked her to stay with Agni for one year leaving behind the Maya-Sita.[7] And even then when Ravana came, he took the entire block of earth on which she stood[8] and kept her in Asokavana 'like a mother'.[9] Tulsidas, Kamban and other writers of the Ramayana have followed the author in one or the other part. This shows the influence exerted by the Adhyatma Ramayana on the later writers. The Adhyatma Ramayana (with 7 kandas and 66 chapters including the Anukramanika and over 4,300 slokas) is said to belong to the Brahmanda Purana, Uttara Khanda and written by Veda Vyasa who is the traditional author of all the Puranas. About the origin of the book, the *Anukramanika* says that Mother Parvati wanted to know of the nature of Sri Rama and the answer given by Bhagavan Siva has become famous as the Adhyatma Ramayana (Anu. 19-20). It is called 'Adhyatma' or spiritualized Ramayana because it is full of instructions on bhakti, jnana, upasana, right conduct, etc. remembering always the metaphysical background. The Adhyatma Ramayana is also known as Rama Gita (Anu. 48). It has been described as the nectar churned out of the ocean of the Upanishads.[10] This statement reminds us of the similar one regarding the Gita. Like Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita, Sri Rama too gives his message while instructing Lakshmana and others. The purpose of the book is purification of the people. As it has been said :

> 'This Ganga of Adhyatma Ramayana arises from the mountain of Siva, meets the ocean of Rama and purifies the three worlds on the way.'[11]

As told before, jnana, vijnana, bhakti and vairagya are forcefully presented here (I. 1. 9). The discussion started with the question whether Sri Rama forgot his real nature, for otherwise why should he weep for Sita (I. 1. 13). As an answer the basic philosophy which is non-dualistic but reinforced by devotion has been presented. Sita gives the gist of this in the Sankshepa Ramayana saying that Rama is Purusha, she is Prakriti and the Jiva is free from ignorance when he understands the meaning of Tat-twam-asi that he is identical with the Paramatman. This philosophy of the real nature of Brahman and Jiva has been described by Siva as Rama-Hridaya, the heart of Rama (I. 1. 56). By reading and understanding this a devotee can realize the Highest. Devotion to the Lord also gives the same result.[12]

This book has a good number of stotras or hymns expressing the noblest sentiments of devotion and subtlest reaches of knowledge. Some of them casually deal with the philosophy of religion, of the nature of Brahman, Atman, God, Jiva, Prakriti, creative processes, etc. The avatarahood of Sri Rama is also mentioned in all of them.

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[7] रावणो भिक्षुकरूपेण आगमिष्यति तेऽन्तिकम् ।
त्वन्तु छायां त्वदाकारं स्थापयित्वोटजे विश ॥
(III. 7. 2.)

[8] ततो विदार्य धरणीं नखैरुद्धृत्य बाहुभिः ।
तोलयित्वा रथे क्षिप्त्वा ययौ क्षिप्रं विहायसा ॥
(III. 7. 51.)

[9] मातृबुद्ध्यानुपालयत् । (III. 7. 65.)

[10] रामेणोपनिषत्सिन्धुमुन्मथ्योत्पादितां पुरा ।
(Anu. 49.)

[11] पुरारिगिरिसम्भूता श्रीरामार्णवसंगता ।
अध्यात्मरामगंगेयं पुनाति भुवनत्रयम् ॥ (I. 1. 5.)

[12] अतो मद्भक्तियुक्तस्य ज्ञानं विज्ञानमेव च ।
वैराग्यं च भवेच्छीघ्रं ततो मुक्तिमवाप्नुयात् ॥
(III. 4. 51.)

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Even Vashishta and Kausalya have prayers addressed to him. Valmiki sometimes refers to Rama as Vishnu-tulya, like Vishnu, but in the Adhyatma Ramayana, he is always in his original glory. Among the hymns, however, the most appealing are those that speak of motiveless devotion and self-surrender. As for example, Ahalya prays to Rama :

'In whatever place may I be, O Lord, may I always have deep devotion in you.' [13]

Or Parasurama prays :

'May I have undeflected devotion in you and may I have the company of your devotees.' [14]

Another thing often prayed for is to remain freed from Maya. The Kabandha prays :

'Save me O Lord of the universe, let not your Maya cover my consciousness.' [15]

To Sabari, Rama assures that bhakti is the one thing necessary and there is no other consideration of birth or lineage.[16] Following the Gita-idea Sri Rama too says, 'Like a wish fulfilling tree I do as the devotees wish me to.' (II. 9. 66.)

The above quotations will amply show that the Adhyatma Ramayana stresses on bhakti as much as on jnana. By following these paths a man can realize the goal of life. Jnana-misra bhakti is the path specially recommended by this holy book.

Lilasmarana, thinking of the life and exploits of the Lord is itself accepted in the Bhakti system as a sadhana. The Adhyatma Ramayana says that whoever reads and thinks of Rama will be spiritually benefited (Anu. 38), nay, he will attain Jivanmukti.[17]

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[13] देव मे यत्र कुत्रापि स्थिताया अपि सर्वदा ।
त्वत्पादकमले सक्ता भक्तिरेव सदास्तु मे ।
(I. 5. 58.)

[14] त्वद्भक्तसंगस्त्वत्पादे दृढा भक्तिः सदास्तु मे ॥
(I. 7. 44 or 48.)

[15] त्राहि त्राहि जगन्नाथ मां माया नावृणोतु ते ।
(III. 9. 54.)

[16] मद्भजने भक्तिरेव हि कारणम् । (III. 10. 20.)

[17] यस्तु प्रत्यहमध्यात्म-रामायणमनन्यधीः ।
यथाशक्तिपठेद्भक्त्या स जीवन्मुच्यते नरः ॥
(Anu. 30.)

TO SRI RAMAKRISHNA

SWAMI PREMESHANANDA

Under the gentle breeze of mercy,
Waves have risen in the Ocean of Formless ;
Merged in the Undivided, without beginning and end,
Thou, through Thine inscrutable power,
Hast assumed a human form.

On the side of the mind there is a realm unknown
Where neither the sun nor the moon can enter,
But even there Thine infinite smile
Sheds its rays and lumines with charming light.

Thy body is made of love
And puts to shame the God of Beauty ;
And what sweet light Thine eyes bestrew !
Whoever sees Thee longs to offer at Thy feet
His body, life and mind.

Many ages, come and gone, have awaited Thee,
But today all doubts have vanished ;
Oh, receive the gift of all I have—
I dedicate my life to serve Thee !

(*Translated from Bengali*)

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SRI LALITA-SAHASRANAMA AND PSYCHO-THERAPY
(A theoretical analysis)*

K. B. R. RAO

The worship of Sakti has been a universal feature in India from ancient times. In the forms of Kāli, Durgā, Gāyatrī, Sarasvatī, Sāvitrī, Lalitā etc., Sakti has swayed the minds of Indians, at all times, whether they are high intellectuals or ordinary men. Even philosophers of Absolute Monism, who do not strictly advocate the worship of personalistic Deity are no exception — the great Sankarāchārya himself was an ardent devotee of the Mother Goddess, and his famous *Saundarya-Lahari* is one song of praise and adoration of Sri Lalitā Tripurāsundarī. The cult that surrounds the worship of the Deity in the form of Sakti is called 'tantric' cult, the word 'tantra' being derived from the root 'tan', which means 'to spread'. However, it is not spreading any kind of knowledge, but of a technical nature, concerning 'tattva' and 'mantra'. The former stands for the knowledge of the Cosmic Principles and the latter stands for the science of the Mystic Sound. What concerns us, in this article, is the Cosmic Principle, Sri Lalitā, and the power that lies hidden in that mystic sound. It is the devoted conviction of a sādhaka that the worship of the Deity is the easiest means of salvation, the union of the individual with the Absolute. Apart from any transcendental gain that the worship may hold for the devotee, there is a quiescent effect of a calm of mind, which can be had during one's earthly life, which may have been virtually torn by psychic complexes, repressions and aberrations. At least for this wholesome effect of the mystic sound, enshrined in the chanting of the thousand names of Sri Lalitā, it should commend itself to the modern man in quest of mental peace. The claim that Lalitā-sahasranāma can be a curative to mental maladies does not rest on any blind faith in the promises upheld in the 'Phala-sruti' of the Sahasranama, but ultimately on the theoretical analysis of the Cult regarding the Macrocosm and the Microcosm (the Brahmanda and Pindanda or the Cosmic Universe and the Individual); the physical, the physiological and psychological constituents or centres of the individual being; and the actual subtle and gross repurcussions that one level of Being can have on the other. This is more than Phenomenalism, for it is super-physical and metaphysical in its aim and sweep, attempting a unification of the material and the non-material, the veiled consciousness (the Western Unconscious) and the Pure Consciousness, the Cit. It is this last aspect of the Tantric Philosophy, which holds the key not only to the restoration of balance and peace of mind for an individual in his daily life, but also to the ultimate goal that any man may aspire after.

It is the purpose of this article to lay bare, at short length, the theoretical bases of the claim made in favour of the meditation on Lalitā, the Sakti behind everything. We may consider here only those aspects which have a direct bearing on the topic.

The spinal column of the human being has six (or seven) centres of consciousness or psychic centres of Sakti, each with a special activity. At the base of the spine lies the centre or 'chakra' called Mulādhāra, which enlivens the whole organism. Here the Sakti lies coiled up—so it is called Kudalinī Sakti—only to be awakened [1] by the sadhaka by his

* Read this along with an article 'Lalita and Psycho-therapy' by A. Krishna Rao: *Vedanta Kesari*, Vol. XLVII, No. 10, Feb. '61.

[1] Two ways of rousing the Kundalinī Sakti are suggested: One, by the process of prānayāma, and the other by chanting certain 'mantras', while having before the mental eye the Devatā connoted by the Mantra. We are concerned with the latter here.

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meditation through chanting of the Mantra. The most initial yet the most crucial attempt on the part of any man to realise himself or to condemn himself to the endless 'samsāra' with all possibilities of disturbed mental life, lies in his success to wake up the Potential Power, the Kundalini, or in his failure to do so. For Kundalini is the Power of gigantic potentialities, when roused and set into activity can lift man to the highest pinnacle of his aspirations of eternal Bliss and Knowledge. When activated the Kundalini rises up along the spinal column and pierces through the other psychic centres of Svādhishthāna, Manipura, Anāhata, Visuddha and Ājnā, and reaches the Sahasrāra, the abode of Siva, where the union of Sakti and Siva takes place, which is another name for liberation.

What is important for us, in this account, is the means by which the Kundalini is roused to activity. The recourse is to 'Mantra' an invariable concomitant of 'Tantra'. As Tantra is spreading of knowledge of liberation, so Mantra is the syllable (or syllables) with power to liberate. It is Sakti in the form of Sound or Sabda, of which we find two aspects : Sound in the form of Varna (letter or word) and Sound in the form of Dhvani (unlettered sound). The latter is fundamental, eternal and unstruck, while the former is the resultant of striking or interaction of the vocal organ with air. Varna is auditory, and what makes it possible is the fundamental inaudible Dhvani.

The psychic centre called the Mulādhāra is the seat of the subtle sound or Varna, which is called Parā-sabda. It is motionless, and is causal. It is the Unmanifest Kundalini Sakti herself. When the Sabda begins to move, but not attaining any differentiated condition, it is called Pasyanti. The region of Pasyanti in the human body lies between the Mulādhāra and Manipūra. When the subtle Sabda attains a subtle Artha (nāma and rūpa), mind comes into being as the cogniser and the cognised. At this stage the subtle, yet differentiated, Sabda into nāma and rūpa is called Madhyama, whose region lies between Manipūra and the physical heart. When the Sabda is projected into the outer region beyond the heart, it becomes gross, and is called Vaikhari. This is the uttered sound coming out of the throat and is heard by us. All are the manifestations of the Sabda-Brahman or Sakti, of which three are subtle and unheard, and the fourth only is heard as gross sound. The subtle is at the ideational level referring to the inner-thought-movement, and is an operation of the Cit-sakti and becomes overt or gross as uttered speech. This may be said in other words : the uttered speech or word refers back to the more fundamental idea-power, for it is only a gross projection of the subtle idea-power. It is essential to understand the intimate relationship between the audible gross sound and the inaudible causal sound, for here lies the clue to the magical effect that chanting of the mantra can have on the causal centre of the Sabda, the Mulādhāra. For, given the proper stress, the mantra we utter can evoke the power of Consciousness (Cit-sakti) into activity, which is lying coiled up at the Mulādhāra. Taking this internal relationship between the Vaikhari and the subtler forms of Sabda, we can safely maintain that a mechanical inattentive repetition of a mantra will have a desired, but natural, effect on the Mulādhāra. The Universe, according to this philosophy, is an infinite stress-system, and all 'centres', whether near in the human body, or distant in the extended universe, are always in constant interaction. It is on this theoretical foundation of the conception of the Universe, which is an infinite-stress-system, that chanting of the mantras is advocated with no strictures of a deeply concentrated attention. That an uttered sound will cause physical vibrations in the surrounding environment is a demonstrated truth. In the same way the vibrations will reach into the physical body, and will cause reverberations in the appropriate physical counterparts of the psychical centres, leading to the sympathetic vibrations of the latter. Call it by whatever name : psycho-neuro parallelism or psycho-neuro interactionism (it

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is the latter, which is accepted here), we have the desired effect of contacting the Mulādhāra and causing the Kundalini to wake up.

Here we reach a point which holds for us the theoretical possibility of reaching the Mulādhāra, and so shaking up the 'samskaras' which find their mainstay therein. What is pertinent psychologically for us, who are interested in dealing with mental and personality mal-adjustments, is the cue given here of the method of piercing the cover of the unconscious and bringing to the level of the conscious, the hidden and repressed 'tendencies' or 'samskaras', the very causes of our mental illness. The Western method of psycho-analysis in this direction is well known. By creating an environment the psycho-analyst salvages memories of the past from the depths of the unconscious, in a 'free-association' method, to the level of the conscious, and reveals the causal relationship between present maladies and past events and so relaxes the mental tensions and perhaps succeeds in restoring balance and normality. But from the point of view we have endeavoured to sketch above, the suggestion is clear enough. If thought, that is, Sabda and Artha, is taken to be a form of 'parispanda' or vibration in the mind-stuff, it does not fail to reach and shake even the hidden aspects of mental life. This is how meditation on the Mystic Sound, Lalita, and of it a thousand times, will act on the person. From the Western point of view it may be said that meditation on Lalita will act on the Unconscious, but it is the other way of saying from the Sākta point that it acts on the 'veiled-consciousness', which is only a manifestation of Pure-consciousness, the Cit-sakti.

Apart from the religious satisfactions and benefits that meditation on Lalita may have, it will not be wrong to say that its therapeutic value for redressing mental ailments is considerable.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA

T. V. VENKATARAMANAN

'Whenever virtue subsides and vice prevails, I come down to help mankind,' declares Bhagavan Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita. These hope-instilling words of Lord Krishna have been and are the nurturing vehicle for the Dharmic people in our Punyabhoomi. When the country is turned into a cauldron of adharma and injustice, whenever it forgets its true ideal of righteous living and faith then the Lord Almighty incarnates Himself to herald the dawn of justice and peace and to extirpate and exterminate unfaith and injustice, i.e. adharma. He says this in the Gita. The Lord by these declarations has made us robust optimists about our goal and purpose.

At a time when He was most needed and eagerly invited, the Lord took His incarnation as Sri Ramakrishna. For nearly 50 years before his birth, our country 'had been wading through a bewildering welter of cultural ideals. Politically overthrown by the British, she had been fast coming under the sway of an exotic civilization.' Her political humiliation, social degradation and economic exploitation coupled with Christian missionary manipulation made her forget all the gigantic and dynamic potentiality and vigour of her age-old culture. In the strange British academic milieu young minds began to swallow queer cultural shibboleths, such as India had no culture worth the name, that her entire past was a foolish quest after false ideals, that if she wanted seriously to live she would have to remould herself thoroughly in the lathe of European civilization. No wonder these incantations carried through malicious, malignant and monstrous propaganda, lulled the self-

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consciousness of the Indians to sleep. Because of the country's cultural degeneration, spiritual degradation and backboneless damnation it was ripe time for the incarnation of the Lord to herald an era of harmony and spiritual prosperity and progress. Many reform movements entered into this field but with no marked success. At this hour of national calamity and cataclysm Sri Ramakrishna was born in 1836.

Swami Nirvedananda calls his life a 'web of spirituality' and adds :

> 'Ramakrishna's life lacks the wealth of events and striking achievements that are commonly associated with the lives of great men. The aristocratic dignity of Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore, the reputed oratory and majestic personality of Keshab Chandra Sen, and the vast erudition and polemical zeal of Swami Dayananda were all in striking contrast with the humble and unostentatious life of Ramakrishna. Neither aristocracy of birth nor wealth nor academic distinction nor power and prestige in the temporal sense had anything to do with his career. Yet this humble life had something of immense value and significance, something very subtle that eludes the grasp of the common historian. Like the lives of the general run of great men, his life did not draw all its materials from the sense-world. His entire being, from the centre right up to the circumference was a marvellous web of spirituality. Spiritual ecstasy and realization were the yarn of which this wonderful texture was made.'

With this introduction of the advent and life of Sri Ramakrishna let us discuss how far the personality and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna may influence the minds of the young people who are now facing a socio-economic and technical change in the world around them. They are awed and attracted by the material comforts and sense pleasures offered by this world. Is there really a spiritual quest and yearning in the mind of us, the youth of India? This is very puzzling, no doubt. As sincerity is the *sine qua non* for spiritual progress we can examine our heart a little more. Hypocrisy is the worst enemy for us. But if a few are really eager to tread the path of spirituality what is the way out? Here comes the dynamic personality and the simple teachings of hope of Sri Ramakrishna. He does not impose or inflict anything on us. He teaches us to be our own natural self, calm, cool and clever with a mind avid for the vision of the Lord, with moral perfection and surrender to His will, with a heart that is ever tender and devoted to the mysterious unknown. He is our beacon-light, our pole-star, our spiritual dynamo. His authority is always of an authority whose authority is greater than the authority of any other authority i.e., of the supreme Lord. Rabindranath Tagore said once about Sri Ramakrishna : 'The simplicity of his heart shames for all times the pomp and pedantry of pandits and pontiffs.' His simplicity and one pointed absorption in God made him the greatest of all seers, seekers and sages and an embodiment of thousands of years of Indian spiritual realisation and experience. He asked us to understand very early in our life the hollowness of this samsara. He asked us to plunge into the path of spirituality and realisation. He wanted us to catch a glimpse of Eternity and to visualize the permanent in all impermanent things. He asked us to serve humanity as it is the manifestation of the Lord. He bequeathed to us the highest and abstruse philosophical conceptions, ideas and truths, in the simplest language with examples unsurpassed in the history of spiritual instruction. His inimitable qualities and virtues beg the youth of our land to practise and imbibe. His vision, vitality and versatility captivate our hearts and make us sing in praise of his glory. He respected every faith and proved to the sceptical world the reality of God's existence. If people are to indulge in talks of atheism even after hearing about Sri Ramakrishna's life then the future is bleak. 'God is real and He can be seen', he said. His deep faith and realisation is exemplified by his feeling the immediate presence of Mother Kali, and his identification with Radha Herself when he took to the sadhana of Madhura Bhava towards Lord Krishna. These supernormal elements of Ramakrishna's life may be questioned by the doubting Thomases. But we must remember that 'A doubter

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perishes', — *Samsayatma vinasyati*, as Lord Krishna said in the Gita. Again he assured, 'O Son of Kunti, my devotee never perishes'. So we must approach the spiritual verities with all faith and shraddha.

Sri Ramakrishna respected every dogma and faith. He was the prophet of harmony, unity and tolerance. He saw truth everywhere. He believed in our great Acharyas and scriptures. He saw in every woman the Divine Mother. He asked us to respect every woman as the manifestation of the Mother. In Kali Yuga, he said, Bhakti is the path to perfection. Surrender is its key-note. He said, 'Mother prevents one who has taken complete refuge in Her from taking a wrong step'.

The Kena Upanishad declares, 'In this human life, we would sustain a great loss if we failed to make an effort to raise ourselves to spiritual excellence'. The mystic poet Kabir says, 'O Friend, hope for Him whilst you live, understand while you live, for in life deliverance abides.' Socrates defined man as a 'rational animal', Plato as a 'social animal' and Aristotle as a 'political animal'. It didn't occur to any of them to define man as a 'spiritual being'. India alone is proud of calling man as a spiritual being. To attain to higher spirituality is the birth-right and goal of every man. The method is devotion and surrender. Like the Lord, Sri Ramakrishna is compassionate, sympathetic and loving. Let us pray for his grace for the realisation of God.

CONQUEST OF FEAR

S. KALPAGAM

Geraldine Coster, while speaking of 'fear', tells that fear is not something that comes; it is always there in all creatures as well as in human beings, 'just as it is always in the nursery, in the school room, in the office and on the golf-links'. Moreover he says, "Ask a person casually and he will probably say that he has known 'fear' 'a few times' or 'once or twice' during his life." In our daily life, every one of us is afraid of a hundred trivial things. The everyday fears which upset us in modern civilized life may be classified into various groups as conscious and unconscious, childish and adult fears etc. Leaving aside the discussion of these infinite variety of fears, let us see what the cause of this fear is, and how it arises in man, in a general way.

The great majority of human beings seems to have both a longing for and a keen dread of novelty. The 'desire' for new experience is a natural manifestation of the will-to-live. The 'libido' spurs us on to activity, mental, emotional and physical, and if this desire for something new finds no healthy outlet, it achieves a morbid one. But the outgoing impulse is held in check by the dread of what may come, and the manifestation of this fear is recognized as an attribute of middle and old age.

One of the great sources of misery is 'fear' of which the root cause is 'desire'. There is no end to our infinite desires in this world, but their fulfilment is very much limited. As long as we differentiate others from us, as long as the idea that there are two in the universe is strong in us, fear is always there. We, human beings, never find satisfaction with our station in life, even if we are rich and powerful, and then also we make ourselves unhappy by comparing our status with those who are still more powerful and superior. As we feel that we are unable to get more pleasure and enjoyment, then out of jealousy, we wish to injure others who are powerful and wealthy and try to bring them down to our status, and it is fear that causes men to injure and rob

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others. The real cause of it is the 'dualism' which makes man consider the rest of the creation as separate from him.

'*Ignorance*' causes desire. This world is represented as having no real existence of its own. Everything here, that appears to be real to us is truly unreal, full of darkness and it passes away. The things of this world will not last for ever. So it is due to the veil of ignorance, we are unable to discriminate between the real and the unreal and run after them which have no real existence at all. But as long as we are in our ignorance, we cannot know what it is. So our first and foremost duty is to remove this ignorance by following the way shown by the Rishis, who by discrimination and contemplation of that alone which is real gained real 'Knowledge' which helped them to free themselves from all sorts of 'fear', miseries etc. We may ask how can we know that the immediate perception of those Rishis are true? The answer is that the direct knowledge of those Rishis is true and useful, for it helped them to freedom from all kinds of miseries, and it is with the help of that 'knowledge' they attained freedom from 'fear' of all sorts and enjoyed eternal peace.

So our duty is to remove the ignorance by discrimination and direct knowledge. If we attain that 'true knowledge' then fear will run away from us. In the Indian philosophy, the classical example is the story of the 'fear' that arose in the man who mistook a rope for a snake. When he could discriminate between the rope and the coiled snake—when he realized his mistake,—the 'fear' vanished from him at once. That is why the man of 'discrimination', 'seeing the reality under the illusion and glitter of the world' finds it better to lay up 'treasures in heaven' and by practice of dispassion and by killing the ego learns to stand 'unmoved by praise or blame, undejected by sorrow and unelated by joy.' By the practice of dispassion, desirelessness, discrimination, detachment etc., a feeling of tranquillity, fearlessness and contentment are achieved. It is said: 'To be hopelessly attached to people, possessions or places bring no lasting happiness to a man, for behind the spurious joy of possessions there always lurks the great 'fear of loss'. If we become unattached by attaining true knowledge then there will be no 'desire' to possess things or no 'fear' to lose them at any moment. As Bhartrihari analyses all fears, in a few verses and concludes that 'in vairagya alone there is fearlessness'.

The positive aspect of vairagya is love. Love is an antidote of fear. But it is really very difficult to define 'love'. All of us know what we mean by the term, for we feel the warmth of 'love' being under the care and protection of our parents, brothers, masters, husband, wife, children etc. We all of us know how to love, but still we are to purify our love more and more, for we love a person in expectation of something in return, but that is 'selfish love'. Moreover we want more to be loved than we love others. But; 'Love for love's sake' is the best thing. When once Yudhishthira was driven away from his kingdom, his queen asked him how it was that he being the most virtuous of men and devotee of Lord Krishna, had to suffer so much. Yudhishthira replied,

> 'Behold, my queen, the Himalaya, how grand and beautiful it is; I love it. Similarly, I love the Lord. He is the source of all beauty, of all sublimity. He is the only object to be loved: my nature is to love Him, and therefore, I love; I do not pray for anything; I do not ask for anything. Let Him place me wherever He likes. I must love Him for love's sake. I cannot trade in love.'

This is what is called 'pure love'.

Is it possible to possess that pure, unalloyed, selfless love? Yes, it is attained if His mercy is showered upon us through His benign grace. But it is very difficult to get His mercy unless we submit and surrender ourselves with body, mind and speech to Him. By our humble devotion only, can we have that pure love. It is possible for us to adopt the attitude of intimacy only when there is pure love. The Mother 'Bhavatarini' who appears only as a stone image to us, was awakened by Sri Bhagavan Ramakrishna. Was it not because of his

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pure and unalloyed love that made him shed copious tears wishing to behold Mother face to face, and to talk with Her, which he did later? Then the love of the Gopis. Leaving behind their home, husband, children, everything, they ran behind Sri Krishna forgetting their very self on hearing His flute, and thus plunged themselves into the very ocean of Ananda. How could it be possible? Is it not because of their pure love?

Again take the case of Sri Haridas, who was a devotee of Sri Chaitanya. When the Muslims beat him with ropes, and allowed him to be swallowed by a hungry lion, did he ever think of fear? Was he afraid of death? No. The pure love that he had towards Lord removed all those unsurmountable obstacles and suffering. Similar is the case of Saint Appar who was saved from burning and drowning, due to his faith and love towards Lord Siva. Devotees like Mirabai, Arunagirinathar, Kannappa Nayanar and their pure love respectively towards Sri Krishna, Sri Subramanyam, and Lord Shiva saved them from all obstacles and miseries of this world, and gave them the realization of oneness with the Lord at the end.

The love that we are having towards mortal beings, when directed unreservedly towards Godhead, becomes pure love. It is so where there is no fear, or reservation, no expectation or disappointment. An ineffable joy is the result as is seen in the case of the Gopis. Their love was genuine and divine, free from worldliness.

It is stated that love in the lowest sense of the word is 'selfishness'; 'for those that love the Self love it without knowing what it is. When they love, knowing what the Self is, they are called sages', says Swami Vivekananda, for then their love is impartial and free from all the taints of worldliness.

When once Maitreyi asked Yajnavalkya the way out for salvation, Yajnavalkya explained that it is for the sake of the self that one loves another. Whenever we particularize an object, we differentiate it from the Supreme Self, and so there is selfishness in our love. But as soon as we see and think of the object or person as the very Atman, then the same love that we are bestowing on that person or thing becomes eternal.

It is said that bliss forms the foundation of all true love known to us. So there won't be any reaction of pain or misery in true love. If it brings misery in return then it is termed 'selfish' which is described as a 'kind of morbid affection of the slave, insinuating itself as love.' 'Love brings a reaction of bliss. If it does not, it is not love.' The real love is something that does not stand on physical attachment at all. Swami Vivekananda writes, 'Such lovers may be a thousand miles away from one another, but their love will be all the same; it does not die, and will never produce any painful reaction.'

In pure love there is no possibility of fear, for only through the knowledge and realization of the oneness of the Atman, this pure love is gained, when there is no second, wherefrom will fear arise? The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says that it is from the second one that fear arises and not from oneself.

Jesus Christ preached the doctrine 'Love thy neighbour as thyself.' It is because we love ourselves so very dearly that we wish to have everything for our own enjoyment. When we know the truth 'I and you are one', then we can love each other as we are loving our own self.

Again Swami Vivekananda says, 'Through all mouths you eat, through all hands you work, through all eyes you see, you enjoy health in millions of bodies, when this idea comes, and we realise it, see it, feel it, then will misery cease, and fear with it. Fear ceases and then alone come perfect happiness and perfect love.'

There is an ancient saying, 'God sleeps in the mineral, dreams in the plant, stirs in the animal and awakens in man'. So, by cultivating this pure love, let us all try to realize that the indwelling spirit of ours is dwelling in the whole of creation and thus by lifting up our hearts, let us all become worthy to be addressed as 'Children of Immortality'.

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GITA-CONCEPTION OF PURUSHOTTAMA

M. A. RUKMINI

The Gita has been and will continue to be a perennial and permanent source of inspiration to many writers, and it is, however, a pity, that the *philosophic perennis* expounded by the Supreme Lord for the benefit of mankind to Arjuna has been misunderstood and misinterpreted by countless persons, Indians and foreigners.

A sincere aspirant would readily find all he wants in the fifteenth chapter of the Gita for which I have a special liking. It is a short chapter. The twelfth is also of the same length. But, the subject-matter of the fifteenth chapter is the entire philosophy of the Vedanta presented in a nut-shell. Corresponding to the *Yggdrasil* of the Scandinavian Mythology, the chapter opens with an account of the *Asvattha-tree*. It contains an account of the universe which is considered to be a theatre of all activities, secular and spiritual. It refers to the status of the finite selves. It explains the Supreme Lord as the *Purushottama*. It contains a description of the final state of liberation or Moksha. It describes the Supreme as the central energiser of all creation. He is the Supreme Lord Immanent in all creation. Spiritual realities could be seen only by intellectually and morally purified vision. They cannot be seen by the ordinary, evil-tainted eye. The need for freedom from dualities or opposites like pleasure-pain, joy-sorrow, depression-animation and so on is emphasized. Those devoted to the Lord and practising meditation on the Lord according to the methodology of Yoga realize the Lord in due time. Others are not able to reach Him at all. Showy spirituality is hardly serviceable as a realizational weapon. The doctrines of Vedanta, particularly those dear to the hearts of the followers of Visishtadvaita are to be found in the fifteenth chapter.

Arjuna as a Kshatriya had his own problems. Draupadi as a queen had her own problems. Prahlada and Dhruva as youngsters had their own problems. At a glance one can realize that *not* all problems can be of the same nature, same complexity, or same magnitude. All that the aspirants can do would be completely to surrender their all, including their personalities, and the Supreme Lord would certainly take care of the aspirants provided the surrender is taintless and morally motivated. The term *prapadye* in the fourth stanza and *bhajati* in stanza 19 contain the concentrated quintessence of the doctrine of *prapatti* or *saranagati* which is specially sacred to followers of Ramanuja.

Many people practise *Political Prapatti*. But real, genuine, sincere self-surrender to the Supreme has absolutely not even the faintest or slightest tinge of mundane desires, motives or expectations. The only dominant desire or main motive is to be saved from transmigration. It will thus be clear that all the essential and fundamental tenets of the Visishtadvaita philosophy are found concentrated in the fifteenth chapter of the Gita. The Gita is not an individual answer to an individual question though the general context of the Gita is very rightly described as Krishna-Arjuna-samvada; the Dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna. But this is merely a superficial view. The exposition of the general philosophy of life undertaken by the Lord would demonstrate at once that the message of the Gita is meant for all adhikaris, eligibles or aspirants wherever found.

The exhilarating Cosmic Game is played by the Supreme Lord. Creation, preservation, destruction and other vicissitudes of the universe are all manifestations of the eternal play of the Lord. (The Vendanta Sutra—Lokavattu-lila-kaivalyam deserves notice). The play-view contains an answer to all critics ancient and modern, and even to critics who are yet to be. They go on asking — If the

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Lord be perfect, why should He at all take the trouble of creating the World? and so on. The only answer is, it is all the Play of the Lord. The Lord's Play is, however, inseparable from the Lord Himself. The other view is equally tenable.

Creation is intended for the purpose of furnishing a theatre of activity in the light of the inexorable Law of Karma. Moral and spiritual effort and endeavour have to be put in by aspirants for climbing up to the goal. Karmic activity requires a theatre. The world is the Theatre. Universal poets like Shakespeare have strikingly described the world to be a stage and human beings as actors. The eternal Drama goes on.

On a view like this, reality of the world we live in, reality of individual selves, reality of religious and moral activity, freedom of the will, desire for obtainment of final release from the evil of transmigratory existence or series of lives and deaths, quest for the Agent or the Authority who would be competent and able to save aspirants from all troubles (Brahma-jijnasa), need for earning the Grace of the Lord (Bhagavat-Prasada), need again for Devotion (Bhakti), and all connected and concomitant doctrines follow step by step ultimately leading to the goal of emancipation (Moksha or Mukti). The Lord has shown beyond all possibility of doubts or misgivings that these doctrines are perfectly logical, rational and sanctioned by all secular and spiritual criteria.

I do not mean to convey the impression that other chapters of the Bhagavad-Gita are in any manner less important, or less philosophical. All that I have done, in the course of these paragraphs, is just recording of my own personal preferences and reactions to the fifteenth chapter of the Gita. I may also add some connected concepts though these should be familiar to students of the Gita. The conflict between sense of duty and personal inclinations or hedonistic desires is bound to be felt or realised by all aspirants sooner or later. Every individual has been described as Arjuna. Every mind has been symbolically taken as *Kurukshetra*. The Immanent Lord, (Antaryami) is the Lord Krishna, who has taught or delivered the message of the Gita. The symbolical or the allegorical interpretation of the Gita has been carried too far and even overdone. These have openly proclaimed their doubts as to the historicity of the character-persons of the Mahabharata and their existence in concrete reality, in flesh and blood.

There is no doubt that the *dramatis personae* of the Mahabharata and the Gita were in those days as real as we are to-day. When the incarnations of the Lord appear on the mundane scene, there always occurs a striking mixture of the human and the superhuman, the natural and the supernatural. Thus, in the instances of Rama and Krishna, it can be found that their lives as chronicled or recorded by gifted divine poets, Valmiki and Vyasa, reveal an astonishing mixture of human and superhuman elements. Rama at one time can weep for the loss of his wife, while at another time, He can threaten to destroy the whole world by means of his little finger. Krishna again, can play the child stealing butter, at one time, but, at another time, the same baby can exhibit to a wonder-dazed mother, in his tiny mouth the entire universe of stars and planets, oceans and mountains including himself and the mother. These and allied phenomena would finally and conclusively demonstrate that many data and facts of religion and philosophy, epics, and spiritual lore cannot be explained on a strictly rationalistic basis. Faith plays a very prominent part in these matters. Ultimately, faith must and will prevail. That, however, is *not* faith in economics and politics. It should be faith in the Lord, and His help and guidance being available to all who may approach Him in a spirit of absolute, dedicated, devotional self-surrender.

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RECONSTRUCTING INDIA

SWAMI ASHOKANANDA

...We have so far discussed the *spirit* of the future development of India. But mere spirit is not enough in this world, though it is no doubt essential. It is true that when the spirit wakes up, it finds suitable forms for itself. But the wastage of experiment and repeated rejection which precedes the final discovery of the suitable form, is often very great and entails great loss of power and time. National workers therefore must also give earnest attention to the *forms* which the rising spirit of the nation should be given. Unsuitable forms often strangle the spirit and obstruct its manifestation. India therefore must discover most suitable forms for the renascent Indian spirit.

In our opinion, Swami Vivekananda has already given us the forms which the future nation should take. This great prophet of Indian nationalism has not only bequeathed to the nation knowledge and strength but also the forms in and through which they are to work out the destiny of India. Swamiji once remarked that renunciation and service are the two national ideals of India, and India being intensified in those channels, the rest will take care of itself. Renunciation stands for the goal of the nation, the pure spiritual illumination, and service for the methods, especially Karma Yoga, by which the goal is to be attained. All activity is to be conceived as service of the Divine in man. If that is so, the forms of the ideal and the method become at once determined. The one is to be monasticism and the other is to be worship in work, or as we say, *Math* and *Mission*. We must explain the terms before our meaning can become clear. *Math* stands predominantly for spiritual forms proper, outside the pale of society, devoting itself essentially to spiritual and intellectual culture. But it does not stand aloof from the society, unconcerned with its needs and aspirations. Remaining outside, it yet mixes in the affairs of society in the spirit of pure service, attending to its physical, mental and spiritual needs and teaching it to guide its daily life and individual and collective activities in fealty to and inspired by the ultimate spiritual ideal. When the Math thus concerns itself with the life of society, it becomes the *Mission,* and then it co-operates with the members of society to realize society's ideals and fulfil its wants. Of course in the Mission the members of the Math take a leading and guiding, but not dominating, part, for they often happen to embody the ideal in a greater degree and do social services in a truer spirit. It will be admitted that so far as the representation and realisation of the ultimate national ideal goes, monasticism is its highest and clearest expression. We therefore think that the Indian nation, in the final realisation of its goal, cannot do better than advocate the monastic form. What is to be the form of the collective activities of those who do not bid for the highest goal, who are yet on the way and in the world? This, we think, can be nothing better than the Mission. Suppose every group of villages were to have a Math where would live those who are devoted to the practice of the highest ideal; and along with the Math there were to be an Association, of which all men and women of the villages and the Math were members, devoting itself to the promotion of every good of the villages, educational, sanitary, medical, industrial, economical, social, cultural and spiritual, fulfilling those functions through an elected executive. This Association would be a Mission Centre. The executive body being under the guidance of the Math and inspired by it, will fulfil its

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function from a true spiritual motive. It may for convenience's sake have sub-committees looking after the different functions of the community. But through this Association, there will be a fruitful co-ordination of the entire social life ; and *what is more important, every work will be done in the spirit of worshipful service which the connection with and the guidance by the Math will create and maintain.* This will be, we think, the future organisation of our rural and urban communities,—all social service, in order to be truly performed, affiliated to the pure spiritual principle. Thus there can be any amount of rajasic activity for achieving material good,—its direct and intimate relationship with the spiritual ideal will carefully restrain its forward step from straying away from the true path. If the whole country were to be dotted over with such Maths and Missions, will not India have regained both its spirit and form ?

The object of the Ramakrishna Order is nothing short of this achievement. It wants to honeycomb India with its monastic and service centres. The ideal of its centres of service is the enrolment of every man and woman, of every caste, creed and race, Hindu, Muhammadan and Christian, as its member, and the performance of *all* services, social, economical, educational, industrial, sanitary, medical, intellectual, cultural and spiritual, through the agency of the centres, so that the whole community consisting of the different credal, racial or caste groups may be organised into real unity, stimulated and sustained by India's spiritual ideal. We do believe that national striving cannot do better than help the establishment of such centres. Our use of the words *Math* and *Mission* must not be understood to mean that we want all such centres to be under the guidance of *our* own Order. What we intend is that the Math and Mission centres, as conceived by Swami Vivekananda, offer most suitable models for national organisation. Let there be many such organisations all over India, under any guidance ; only let them be faithful to the Ideal in profession and practice, and let the work be done in the spirit indicated above ; that is enough. In many places organisational work is being undertaken ; and we are happy to note that similar Ashramas and service associations are being started by other agencies than ourselves. This is a movement in the right direction. Let us hope greater advance will be made and much more rapidly.

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	b.	*d.*
Vivekananda	1863 January 12	1902 July 4
Brahmananda	1863 January 21	1922 April 10
Saradananda	1865 December 23	1927 August 19
Yogananda	1861	1899 March 28
Niranjanananda	(?)	1904 May 9
Advaitananda	(81 Years)	1909 December 28
Ramakrishnananda	1863 July 13	1911 August 21
Trigunatitananda	1865 January 30	1915 January 10
Premananda	1861 December 10	1918 July 30
Adbhutananda	(?)	1920 April 24
Turiyananda	1863 January 3	1922 July 21
Subodhananda	1867 November 8	1932 December 2
Sivananda	(in the eighteenfifties)	1934 February 20
Akhandananda	1864 September 30	1937 February 7
Vijnanananda	1868 October 28	1938 April 25
Abhedananda	1866 October 2	1939 September 8

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A CHRONOLOGY OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S LIFE

Here is given by Sri Natavarlal Dave an exhaustive list of dates of incidents in the life of the Master.

1775 Birth of Khudiram.

1791 Birth of Chandra Devi.

1799 Khudiram of about twenty-five, married Chandradevi of eight.

1805 Ramakumar was born (so he was 31 years older than the Master).

1810 Katyayani was born.

1814 Khudiram lost his properties and ancestral house in Derepore and soon settled at Kamarpukur.

1821 Ramakumar and Katyayani were given in marriage.

1824 Khudiram started on a pilgrimage of 1500 miles at the age 49, to Rameshwar on foot and returned in 1826.

1826 Rameswar was born (so he was older than the Master by 10 years).

1834 Katyayani was possessed when she was 24.

1835 Khudiram went to Banaras and Gaya at 60.

1836 Gadadhar (Sri Ramakrishna) was born on 18-2-1836.

1840 Sarvamangala was born.

1843 First trance of Gadadhar, at the sight of white cranes against dark clouds.

1843 Khudiram passed away at 68, when the Master was only 7.

1845 Sacred Thread ceremony for Gadadhar.

1846 Second trance, while going to Anur village to visit Vishalakshi temple.

1847 Third trance, while playing the part of Siva.

1848 Marriage of Rameshwar and Sarvamangala.

1849 Ramakumar's wife died at 36, giving birth to Akshay.

1850 Ramakumar opens Sanskrit tol at Jhamapukur, Calcutta.

1852 The Master came to Calcutta at 16, and joined his elder brother Ramakumar.

1853 Birth of the Holy Mother, 22nd December.

1855 Dakshineswar temple (Kali-Badi) was completed by Rani Rasmani. The consecration ceremony of this Kali temple took place on the 18th Jyaishtha on Snanayatra Day i.e. 31st May 1855. Rani Rasmani purchased a large Jamindari for 2 lakhs and 26 thousand rupees, in the District of Dinajpur from Trailokyanath Tagore, and made it a trust property on the 29th August, for the maintenance of this temple. Next day to Janmashtami the leg of the image of Vishnu was broken and Sri Ramakrishna gave verdict that the same can be continued to be worshipped after repairs. The Master started working as a priest in the temple of Vishnu. Hridayaram (Hriday), the son of Hemangini Devi, came to Dakshineswar at the age of 16. He stayed there for nearly twenty-five years with Sri Ramakrishna.

(1855 to 1858, the 'Brilliant period' of Sadhana by Sri Ramakrishna, when he adopted attitudes of Shanta, Sakhya, Dasya and Madhura.)

1856 Death of Ramakumar. Master as the priest of the Kali Temple. The first divine inebriation of the Master and the divine vision.

1857 (War of Indian Independence.) Mathur was surprised at the Raganuga worship of the Master. The Master took Rani Rasmani to task for her unmindfulness. The Master was given treatment by Kaviraj Gangaprasad Sen.

1858 Haladhari became the priest of the Kali temple (1858-66). Haladari cursed the Master that blood will come out of his mouth.

1859 The Master was married in May, at the age of 23 with Saradamani who was only a little over 5 years. At this time the Master stayed at Kamarpukur for one year and seven months.

1860 The Master went to Jayarambati for the second time and returned to Dakshineswar. Mathur saw the Master as Shiva and Kali when the latter was pacing in the verandah. The Master in divine inebriation for the second time.

1861 Rani Rasmani put her signature to the Deed of Trust on the 18th February and she passed away the next day i.e. 19th February. Brahmani arrived at Dakshineswar. Vaishnavacharan, Brahmani and Gauri declared Master to be the incarnation of God. Tantra Sadhana under Brahmani. Second divine Madness.

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1862 Chandra and Girija, the two devotees of Bhairavi came to Dakshineshwar. (Chandra came to Belur Math in 1889 c.f. *Great Master*, p. 475). Narayana Shastri of Rajputana and Michael Madhusudan Dutt met Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar. Master visited Pandit Padmalochan, Debendranath Tagore, Bhagavandas Babaji and Swami Dayananda Saraswati (at the garden of Sinti). Krishnakishor of Ariadaha and Govinda and Gopal, two young boys, also came to Dakshineswar.

1863 Completion of Tantra Sadhana. Master's mother Chandradevi arrived at Dakshineswar to stay on the Ganga. Narendra was born, 12th January. Meeting with Pandit Padmalochan. Ramakrishna went on pilgrimage upto Allahabad. Chandradevi also accompanied him.

1864 Jatadhari with Ramalala came to Dakshineshwar and Master practised Vatsalya Bhava under him. Practice of Madhura Bhava. Annameru (mountain of food) was a gift by Mathur. (This year Keshav Chandra Sen had gone to Bombay for preaching). Initiation into Sannyas by Totapuri. Viraja Homa was performed and Gadadhar was named as Ramakrishna probably at this time by Totapuri. Totapuri remained in the garden of Dakshineswar for eleven months.

1865 Akshay replaces Haladhari. Totapuri leaves Dakshineswar.

1866 Sri Ramakrishna remained in the state of peace and bliss for 6 months. Govinda Rai, a Sufi initiated Ramakrishna into Islam. Jagadamba Dasi, wife of Mathur, was cured of dysentery by Ramakrishna who suffered for 6 months, from dysentery and other complaints and Hriday served him.

1867 Ramakrishna went to Kamarpukur after eight years for recouping his health, along with Brahmani and Hriday. The Holy Mother came to Kamarpukur and she was taught domestic works. Ramakrishna now and then visited Sihar, the native place of Hriday. Bhairavi takes leave after two months, having 'adorned Sri Ramakrishna as an incarnation of Sri Gauranga'. Returned to Dakshineswar in October or November.

1868 On January 2, Ramakrishna started on pilgrimage with Mathur and party which numbered about 125 including Hriday and Chandra Devi. They halted at Deogarh and visited Vaidyanath. In Banaras Mathur engaged a couple of houses near Kedarghat. Visited Shrine of Vishwanath, Nanak Panthi's Akhada, Trailanga Swami in whom he found 'manifestation of Vishwanath.' In a boat he visited other shrines too and Manikarnika Ghat. After a week's stay at Banaras the party came to Allahabad. Bath in Triveni. After 3 days they returned to Banaras. After a fortnight they came to Brindaban and stayed in a house near Nidhuvan. Visited temples of Banke Bihari and Govindji, also saw Kaliyadaman Ghat, Shyam Kunda and Radha Kunda. Met Ganga mata, a vaishnava woman devotee, and saw Dhruva Ghat. Here Master adopted Vaishnava dress which he continued for a fortnight. Then they returned to Banaras. This time he visited Bhairavi Brahmani. (She passed away shortly after.) He went to the house of Shri Mahesh Chandra to listen to the music of Vina. Returned to Dakshineswar after nearly 4 months. From Brindaban the Master had brought a handful of sacred dust, part of which he sprinkled in the Panchavati. The rest of it he burried in the little cottage where he had practised sadhana and said, 'Now this place is as sacred as Brindaban.' Hriday's wife died. He married second time.

1869 On tour with Mathur accompanied by Hriday, Master visited Vaidyanath and the village of Mathur in Khulna District for some weeks. Akshay married and died.

1870 Master set out by boat with Mathur and Hriday for Nadia the birth place of Sri Chaitanya. On the way they touched Kalna to see Bhagavandas Babaji. Saw Kolutola Hari Sabha. (Keshav Chandra Sen's journey to England. During six months' stay he addressed 70 meetings).

1871 Mathur died, (July 16. He served Ramakrishna for 14 years.)

1872 Holy Mother came to Dakshineswar for the first time in March at 9 O'clock in the night. Master's meeting Shambhucharan Mallik and practising Christian Sadhana. On 25th May (new moon day) Master performed Shodashi Puja when he worshipped Saradamani Devi as Mother God-

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dess at 9 p.m. in the night. This brought his Sadhana to a close.

1873 Met Dayananda Saraswati who stayed in Calcutta from 15-12-1872 to 15-4-1873. In October, Holy Mother returns to Kamarpukur after staying for 16 months. Rameshwar (48) passed away at Kamarpukur.

1874 Vision of Christ. The son of Mary embraced Ramakrishna and became merged in him. In April, Holy Mother came to Dakshineswar for the second time. Death of Ramachandra Mukherjee, the Holy Mother's father (Ram Navami, April 26).

1875 Holy Mother returns to Jayarambati after a severe attack of dysentery. In September Master meets Keshav Chandra Sen. (At the time Keshav was staying with some of his followers in the garden house of Jayagopal Sen at Belgharia, a couple of miles away from Dakshineswar. Master accompanied by Hriday went in Captain Viswanath's carriage to see Keshav.) Master went to Kamarpukur for the last time, shortly after a visit to Keshav. He also visited Shyamabazar and the village of Hriday and also Jayarambati. After a few months' stay there he returned to Dakshineswar.

1876 Chandra Devi (85) passed away at Dakshineswar on the 40th birthday of Ramakrishna on 27th February.

1877 Holy Mother's third visit to Dakshineswar. (Meeting 'the decoit father' at Telo-Bhelo). Death of Shambhu Mallik, a devotee whom the Master considered to be his second Rasaddar (the first being Mathur).

1878 Intimacy with Keshav. (Keshav married his daughter before she reached her age limit of 14, to the Maharaja of Cooch-Behar. This made a stir in the Samaj and a section of the Brahmos seceded from him and founded a new group called the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj.) Master met Vijayakrishna Goswami, Pandit Shivanath Shastri and Trailokyanath Sannyal, a famous singer and composer. (After this period, Sri Ramakrishna was all the while yearning 'to train the instruments'. He would cry at the top of his voice, 'Come, my boys! oh, where are you? I cannot bear to live without you!' Shortly after this yearning the devotees began to come.)

1879 Ramachandra Datta and Manmohan Mitra arrive at Dakshineswar. (These two introduced to the Master, his two foremost disciples, Narendra and Rakhal.) Devotees were visiting the Master and every Sunday his small room was crowded. Surendranath and Kedar came. (Master designated Surendra as one of his Rasaddars.) Master was photographed at Keshav's house during kirtan. Keshav is also sitting there — 21-9-1879.

1880 At a small festival at Surendra's place, Master met Narendra for the first time in November. Pratapchandra Hazra from a village near Kamarpukur, lived for some years at Dakshineswar. Latu, Rakhal and Gopal came. Tarak came.

1881 Death of Jagadamba Dasi, wife of Mathur on 1st January. Fourth visit to Dakshineswar of Holy Mother, in February or March. Dismissal of Hriday. Third visit of Narendra when Master took him to Jadu Mallik's house. Aswinikumar Datta, patriot devotee of Barisal, met Master at Dakshineswar, in Puja holidays. Master was taken to a photographer and involved in a spiritual conversation in the course of which he fell into samadhi. A photograph was taken then (10-12-1881).

1882 Balaram meets Master at Dakshineswar. Mahendranath Gupta (Master Mahashaya or M.) first met Master at Dakshineswar in March. Jogin came. Master's visit to Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (August 5). Holy Mother came to Dakshineswar for the fifth time. Baburam from Antpur, came to Dakshineswar. Master saw Wilson Circus on 15-11-1882. (In Antpur in Christmas 1886 Narendra and others took the vow of Sannyas, c.f. Life of Ramakrishna by R.R. p. 315).

1883 Last visit to Keshav Chandra Sen at his Lily Cottage (23rd November). Prasanna came to see the Master on 1st January, Adhar in April, Vaikuntha, Kalipada and Sashi, Sarat and Kali at the end of the year.

1884 Keshav passed away in January. The Master said, 'I could not leave my bed for three days when I got that news, it seemed as if a limb of mine was paralysed.' Narendra's father died, early this year of heart failure. Master dislocated one of the bones of his left arm, while walking in the garden of Dakshineswar when he went into trance. Sixth visit of Holy Mother

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to Dakshineshwar. Devendra came to Dakshineswar. (Master showed him his dislocated arm.) Master went to Ishan's house on June 25. Pandit Sashadhar Tarka Chudamani went to him on June 25. Nag Mahashaya came to have Darshan. Girishchandra Ghosh met the Master in the theatre for the third time on 21st September. Gopala's mother saw the Master for the fiirst time. Sarada and Tulasi came. (Master sent Narendra to pray to Mother Kali. Afterwards he said that there will be no want of plain food and clothing. Narendra after the above event was appointed the Head Master of Metropolitan school at Champatala, through the kindness of Pandit Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar. He worked there as a teacher for about 3 or 4 months probably from the month of May of 1885.) Between 1882 and 1884 Master paid two visits to the Brahmo Samaj at Sinti and another to that at Nandan Bazar, both places in the vicinity of Calcutta. Master saw 'Chaitanya Lila' at Star Theatre on 21-10-1884 and Prahlad Charit on 14-12-1884. About the later part of the year 1884, the name of Sri Ramakrishna had become widely known to the Calcutta public and hundreds of people were attracted towards him. (First part of 'Paramahamsa Ramakrishner Ukti', (Sayings), was published by Suresh Chandra Datta.)

1885 Purna came to Master in the beginning of 1885. The coming of the 'marked' devotees was over. Holy Mother's seventh visit to Dakshineswar. Master saw 'Vrishaketu' at Star Theatre on 25-2-1885. Pain at the throat of Master in July. Last visit to Panihati festival with twenty-five devotees. After this throat trouble aggravated. Golapma received Ramakrishna in her dilapidated house in North Calcutta on 28th July. Master leaves Dakshineswar and comes to Calcutta and stays with Balaram Babu. After that he shifts to Shyampukur in August. Prabhudayal Misra a Christian devotee of Quaker's sect met Master on 31st October. Dr Mahendra Lal Sarkar came. Left Shyamapukur for Kashipur garden house on 11th December.

1886 Kalpataru day on 1st January. He blessed his disciples. Master gave his disciples the saffron robe, the sign of Sannyasin, and some kind of monastic initiation towards the end of March. In March on Shivaratri. Vivekananda observed the effect of his divine power by touching Abhedananda and was admonished by the Master. Holy Mother's vow of fast at Tarakheshwar. Sri Ramakrishna passed away on 16th August 1886, after midnight at 1-02 a.m. He lived on earth for 50 years, 5 months and 25 days. In his own words, 'He had passed from one room to the other.' And his disciples cried, 'Victory'.

Sarada Devi	*b.* 1853 December 22	*d.* 1920 July 21
Nag Mahashay	1846 August 21	1899 December
Girish Ghosh	1844 September 28	1912 February 8
M.	1854 July 14	1932 June 4
Purna	(42 years)	1913 November 16
Mathur Babu	(?)	1871 July 16
Shambhu Mallik	(?)	1877
Surendra Mitra	(?)	1890 May 25
Balaram Bose	1842 December	1890 April 13
Ram Datta	1851 October 30	1899 January 17
Gopaler-Ma	(90 years)	1906 July 8
Yogin-Ma	1851 January 16	1924 June 4
Golap-Ma	(60 years)	1924 December 19
Gauri-Ma	About 1857	1938 February 28
Lakshmi Didi	1864 February	1926 February 24
Rani Rasmani	1793 September	1861 February 20

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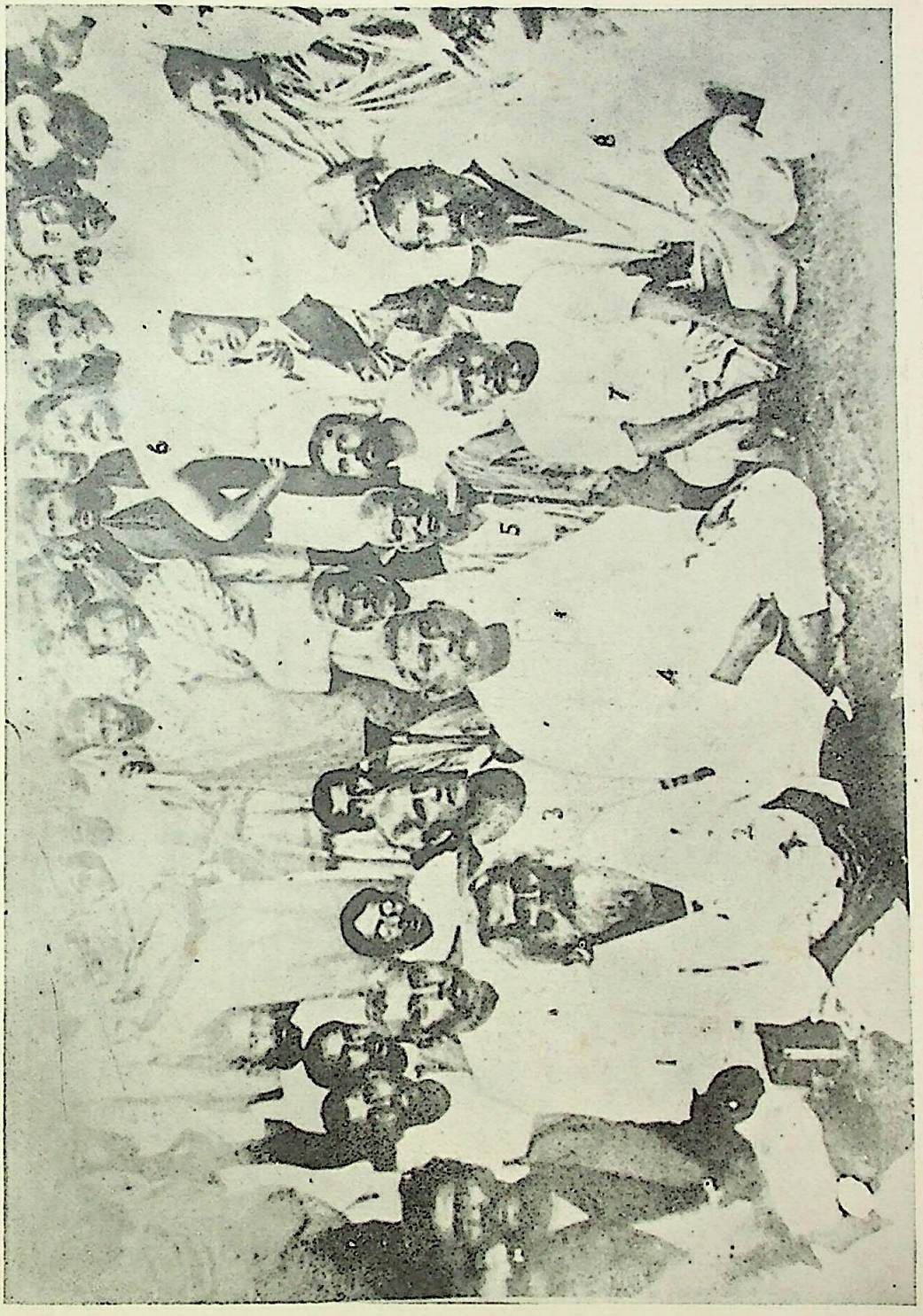


Photo of some of the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna taken at Kankurgachi garden.
1. Atul Babu 2. Akshaya Sen 3. Devendra Majumdar 4. Girish Chandra Ghosh 5. Budo Gopal
6. Ramachandra Datta 7. Latu Maharaj 8. 'M'.

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PRAJAPATI'S INSTRUCTION TO INDRA

M. K. VENKATARAMA IYER

Though the great truths of the Upanishads were originally attained by intuition yet in putting them across, the seers employ such reasoning as comes ready to hand and is in conformity with the general tenor of their teaching. This kind of reasoning is known as *anukula tarka* in the Vedanta system of philosophy. Neither the Upanishads nor the Vedanta rule out reasoning, only they do not allow it to have the last say in regard to supersensuous questions. In respect of what is trans-empirical it is obvious that reasoning, which is rooted in differences, such as are implicit in the concepts of Time, Space and Causality, can have no application. There is therefore no distrust of reason, not even a suspicion that it may be fraught with evil. In view of its inherent limitations it is assigned a subordinate role. Its main function is to serve as the hand-maid of revelation and to render the findings of intuition probable to the ordinary human understanding. For this purpose it makes free use of analogies and examples drawn from every-day experience. Sometimes it employs what has been termed 'natural experience' which is a kind of analytic observation under favourable conditions provided by nature. It is different from the well-known laboratory experiment which is based upon artificial control of the attendant circumstances.

We have many examples in the Upanishads of great philosophical insights being conveyed to the average reader by means of natural experiment. What is known as *Prānasamvāda* is a good instance in point. There is rivalry among the sense and other organs for supremacy. Each one contends that it is the most important one and that without its functioning life would come to a stand-still. They little realise that all of them are dependent upon a principle higher than themselves, viz., the *Mukhya Prana* or *Vital Force*. To bring home this important truth the Upanishadic sages employ what in J. S. Mill's Inductive Logic is known as the *Method of Difference*. The essence of this method consists in varying one circumstance at a time and noting down the result. Thus we are told that one by one the several sense organs such as the eye, the ear and so forth left the body for a year, thinking that in their absence life would cease to function, but actually no such calamity came about. The body functioned as before with only so much diminution as is bound to be caused by the loss of an organ. One may be blind or deaf but yet continue to live. Realising that their temporary absence from the body did not bring in its wake any dire consequence the sensory and other organs returned to their proper places. At last, we are told, the *Mukhya* Prāna tried to separate itself from the body and even as it made the attempt there was a perceptible loosening of all bonds and there were visible signs of an impending collapse of the whole system. The organs then realised that they were of no consequence and that primacy belonged to the Vital Force or *Mukhya* Prana. This episode is to be found in four Upanishads, Prasna, Chandogya, Brihadaranyaka and Kaushitaki.

We have another instance of the application of the Method of Difference in Prajapati's instruction to Indra.[1] It relates to the ultimate nature of the individual self. Prajapati made the following proclamation : 'That Self which is free from evil, free from decrepitude, free from death, free from sorrow, free from hunger and thirst, with true desires and true volitions—should be sought after, should be sought to be understood ; he attains all regions and all desires who has sought to know the Self and who understands it.'[2] This announce-

[1] The instruction is set forth in Chandogya. VIII. 7-12.

[2] Dr. Ganganath Jha's translation of the Chandogya Upanishad is adopted throughout this paper.

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ment reached the world of the gods as well as the world of the demons. Both gods and demons were desirous of knowing the nature of that true Self and hence they deputed Indra and Virochana respectively to wait upon Prajapati and receive the instruction from him. Accordingly Indra and Virochana reached the abode of Prajapati and dwelt there as religious students for thirty-two years. At the end of this period Prajapati wanted to know the object of their mission. They said that they had come to him seeking instruction regarding the Self which, according to his proclamation, was free from evil, free from decrepitude, free from death, free from sorrow and so forth.

The instruction then begins and proceeds by stages. At the fourth and final stage the real nature of the Self is revealed to Indra. Meanwhile he had to do probation for two more periods of thirty-two years each and a concluding one lasting for five years. 'For a hundred and one years did Indra dwell as a religious student', says the Upanishad. That Indra, the King of the gods, considered it worth his while to wait at the feet of Prajapati for such a long period brings out clearly his realisation that the knowledge that was going to be imparted to him was a priceless treasure for which no sacrifice was too high. Sri Sankara writes :

एवं किल तदिन्द्रत्वादपि गुरुतरं इन्द्रेणापि महता यत्नेन एकोत्तरवर्षशतकृतायासेन प्राप्तमात्मज्ञानम्। अतो नातः परं पुरुषार्थान्तरमस्तीत्यात्मज्ञानं स्तौति॥

The four stages of the instruction are connected with as many states of the self, the waking state, the state of dream-sleep, the state of dreamless-sleep and the fourth one known as *Turiya*. It is a well-known fact that at least the first three states are within the experience of most people.

The study of '*avasthā traya*' is a favourite theme in the Upanishads as there is reference to it in the Mandukya, the Chandogya and the Brihadaranyaka. In these states nature provides conditions favourable for laying bare the true metaphysical character of the individual self. Certain circumstances which are present in one of the states are absent in another and at the end it is possible to note what remains when all that is adventitious has fallen away. It is clear that what is present in one state but absent in another is an unessential circumstance and does not form part of the real Self. As the self passes through these states it sheds everything that is contingent and finally emerges in all its natural splendour and shines in its pristine purity. This is essentially a process of abstraction as it penetrates to the core of the matter laying aside one by one all that is in the nature of an adjunct. Chemical analysis may show the physical composition of man, how his body is made up of some little carbon, sulphur, phosphorus, some salts and a quantity of water. But it is wrong to think that man is nothing more than the combination of these ingredients. Apart from and quite other than the physical body there is the subtle body and inside it there is the causal body and going deeper we discover our true self which remains untouched by these wrappages. Just as we peal off the outer coverings of the onion one by one to get at the inner rind even so we have to strip the empirical self bare of all its accretions to know its true nature. The imperatives contained in '*anveshtavyah*' and '*vijijnasitavyah*' serve to recall our attention from the world of appearances and direct it on the reality which lies hidden behind the appurtenances. In the Taittiriya Upanishad also we witness the process of the gradual uncovering of the real Self that lies beyond and behind the five sheaths known as *annamaya kosa, pranamaya kosa, manomaya kosa, vijnanamaya kosa* and *anandamaya kosa*. In the Katha Upanishad we read that 'the person of the size of the thumb, the internal Self, abides always in the hearts of men. Him we should draw out with firmness, as we do the rind from the reed.'

To Indra and Virochana who had completed the initial period of probation and who were

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therefore cleansed of their impurities to some extent, Prajapati's answer was : 'The person that is seen in the eye—that is the Self that I spoke of ; that is the immortal, the fearless, Brahman'. The two aspirants took this person to be the reflected image in the eye and to have it confirmed they asked : 'Sir, he that is perceived in water and he that is perceived in the mirror—which of these is that ?' Prajapati's answer was : 'It is He Himself'. The two students interpreted this answer as confirming the notion they had already formed. Then Prajapati asked both Indra and Virochana to look at themselves in a basin of water where they were unclean and unshaven and subsequently when they had taken a shave and were well-dressed. They saw their reflected images truly representing their condition. This furnished further confirmation of their notion that the person to be known and investigated was the physical body. This is how they understood it, though the import of Prajapati's teaching was something quite different. Since Prajapati believed in gradualness of instruction he did not straightway tell them that they were going away with wrong notions. He was sure that they would feel dissatisfied with their notions and come to him again for further clarification.

And Indra did turn up to have his doubts cleared. He felt that if the changes in respect of appearance and dress were also reproduced in the reflected image then other changes such as the loss of an eye or other limb would also affect the reflected image and finally the disappearance of the physical body would mean the disappearance of the reflected image. He found it difficult therefore to reconcile himself to the notion that the person who was immortal and fearless and who was indeed Brahman could be the reflected image. Prajapati was glad that Indra, unlike Virochana, was dissatisfied with the first notion. He then said that the person who moved about in the state of dream was the Self. For a time this looked like a satisfactory answer, for the dream-self remained unaffected by the changes which came upon the physical body. But soon Indra realised the insufficiency of this answer also, for there were good and bad dreams and the Self had to experience the consequent pleasure and pain. He therefore sought further instruction and Prajapati pointed to him the state of profound sleep wherein there were no dreams and consequently no pleasure and pain. This answer looked adequate for a moment, but soon it appeared to Indra that there was little difference between this state and the state of utter void. It looked like total annihilation and no one could identify it with the immortal and fearless Self. When he expressed this difficulty, Prajapati being convinced that his pupil was really in earnest, came out with the most satisfactory answer.

'Indra, mortal is this body, held by Death ; it is the abode of that immortal, unbodied Self. The bodied one is held by pleasure and pain ; for the bodied Being there is no getting rid of pleasure and pain. Pleasure and pain, however, do not touch the unbodied Being'. This statement puts the various notions regarding the Self in their proper perspective. The true Self has only a fancied connection with the gross, subtle and causal bodies. On account of this wrong notion it thinks that it is subject to change, decay, death, pleasure, pain and so forth. It is a case of superimposing the characteristics of the non-self on the Self. Once this wrong notion is removed, the Self realises its true nature, that it is free from evil, decrepitude, death, sorrow, hunger, thirst and so forth. In the state of waking man identifies himself with the gross physical body and says that he is well or ill, lame or blind, corpulent or lean, sometimes he goes beyond his body and identifies himself with his near and dear ones. In their happiness he feels happy and in their misery he feels miserable. Similarly when he passes to the state of dream-sleep he identifies himself with the subtle body and feels pleasure as it were and pain as it were. In the state of profound sleep there are no dreams because even the mind has become quiescent. It therefore looks like an utter

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blank, but it is not really so. The absence of the states of consciousness does not mean the cessation of consciousness also. In fact, the reminiscent experience of the next morning that one slept well and did not have any dreams shows conclusively that consciousness was there as the standing witness of all the states. If consciousness had lapsed, the recollection of blissful sleep would not be possible. When even the causal body is transcended in the state of Turiya, consciousness is completely disengaged from all its adventitious adjuncts.

It then shines in its native splendour. Just as 'air, cloud, lightning and thunder rise beyond Akasa and appear in their true form, even so this serene Being, rising beyond these bodies, reaches its highest light and appears in its own true form'. The nature of this transcendence is elucidated by Sri Sankara by means of two examples: 'A white crystal placed by the side of something red or blue appears red or blue on account of the adjunct, but closer scrutiny will show that the crystal is really white. It does not acquire its white colour but only shines in its natural colour. Stars which are smitten pale by the rising sun begin to shine in their splendour at night-fall'.[3] Even so before the onset of true enlightenment, spirit, on account of its association with the body, mind, buddhi and so forth appears as the jiva and imagines itself as suffering pain and sorrow, decay and death. But the rise of true knowledge does make a real difference. All false notions disappear and spirit rises to its true stature. It is not as if the individual self merges in something else, but only attains its own inherent glory. It then becomes the Atman which is no other than Brahman. This is Prajapati's final instruction to Indra. It is only in the fitness of things that such weighty teaching should be imparted to king of the gods and not to Virochana who, in fact, broke off in the middle. In the Kena Upanishad also we find Uma, the daughter of Himavan, vouchsafes the ultimate truth only to Indra and not to the lesser gods like Agni or Vayu.

[3] Sutra Bhashya I. iii. 19.

ALAMBAZAR MATH

And the Inception of the Vow of Service

(*Continued from the April issue*)

SWAMI AKHANDANANDA

Khardaha

I was very eager to see the image of Syamasundar of Khardaha and the dwelling of Nityananda Mahaprabhu (apostle of Sri Chaitanya). I started from the Math and reached Khardaha at about 12 noon. I was a guest of a well-to-do Brahman. At that house there had been a Kathā (ceremonial reading) of the Mahabharata the previous day. The reader was Golok Siromani of Halishahar. They told me that afternoon Siromani would come from Halishahar to take payment of his Dakshina (fee).

At noon after my meal I was taking rest on a corridor adjacent to the main gate when there came a man, wearing an ochre-coloured cloth, a garland of Rudraksha beads round the neck and a canvas bag of an antiquated type. He was perspiring. Immediately on arrival he sat down on the corridor. As we got to talk to each other I learnt that he was the Siromani. On knowing what I was he repeatedly bowed with folded hands in the name of the Master and said, "Kedar Chatterji, a cousin of mine, is a great devotee of the holy Paramahamsa. He used to go to Dakshineswar very often."

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Till four in the afternoon our talk was concerning the Master alone. I learnt that with Kedar Babu the Siromani too had come to Dakshineswar and had the good fortune of seeing the Master.

When I reached Khardaha Syamasundarji was in the sleeping chamber. So I wished to stay a night at Khardaha. Siromani too pressed me to stay.

From 5 p.m. the sky became cloudy and it began to drizzle. As preparations were being made for the Kathā I went to see Syamasundar.

After visiting the image when I came back Siromani was finishing his kathā with the song *'Pankajadalagata-jalamiva chanchalamiha jivanam'* (The duration of life is as short as that of a drop of water on a lotus leaf). Soon the kathā came to an end. There were two rooms on the outside of the house, I occupied one and he the other.

At about 8 p.m. the master of the house went out to attend the local Harisabhā (a place where people meet for religious discussion). Very soon Siromani too went out to ease himself. As within half an hour he went out three times for the same purpose, I became afraid and asked him, 'What is the nature of the stool?' *'Jalabat taralam'* (as thin as water), said he. 'What had you for your dinner?' I asked. 'Nothing to get afraid of,' said he, 'I only took some rice with a fish soup and milk and mangoes. The railway station of Halishahar is at a considerable distance from my home and the station of Khardaha too is not very near this place. I fear it is walking all this distance in the hot sun that is responsible for this.'

After the fourth motion he came tumbling into the room and began to roll on the floor. 'Things are as you were apprehending, sir,' said he. 'Oh my God! What a burning have I all over the body!' As he wailed thus he began to clasp my body which he found to be cool. Now the master of the house came back and I told him everything. He brought a phial of Chlorodyne and asked me to give Siromani a dose of it. I did so and went inside the house for my meal.

The Babu who took his meal with me, said, 'Because of the sun Siromani has been ill, chlorodyne will bring him round. You need not worry.' So saying the Babu shut the door. It was then about 10 p.m.

I came out to find that Siromani's condition had become worse still. Every five minutes there were changes of symptoms. There were cramps of the hands and legs. I massaged them only with my hands.

There was drinking water in a small bowl. For some more water and for having a medical man I, at about 1 a.m., called the master of the house and knocked at the door of the inner part of the house. But there was no response. Then I gave the patient some of the contents of the bowl to drink and as I was thirsty I drank out of the same vessel saying *'Apo Narayanah swayam'* (water is the very Narayana).

After three at night a Brahman widow came out from the house to see him. Forthwith the patient had a belching. The widow now began nursing him. The master had brought her from another village and engaged her in cooking.

If anybody had come to help me in the earlier part of the night I could have called in a physician.

In extreme pain the Brahman repeatedly said, 'Are these the pangs of death?' At dawn he asked me to send a telegram to his home.

In the morning the master of the house came out and called in a homeopath. The physician came and observed his condition and the nature of the stool. He gave a medicine to be repeated every five minutes and went out declaring, 'It is a hopeless case.' When going out the physician advised me to leave Khardaha forthwith.

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The telegram was sent. At about 8 (eight) in the morning, just twelve hours after the attack, the Siromani expired.

At about 10 a.m. the Siromani's wife, two sons, a widowed daughter and a son-in-law arrived. The plaintive wailing of the bereaved became unbearable. Two sons and a son-in-law of the deceased were there. A fourth man being available the body could be carried to the cremation ground. But it is a pity that it gave us much worry to secure a fourth man at a place like Khardaha where the Brahmans predominate.

After the funeral rites the Siromani's relatives, with tears in their eyes, pressed me hard to come to their home at Halishahar.

From Khardaha I came to the village Sāimanā to see the image of 'Nandadulal'. After a night's halt there I went back to the Math.

Nageswar Champak

Our Master loved the Nageswar Champak (a sweet scented flower) very much. At the sight of the flower he had trances and he would say, 'The body of Srimati Rādhā (the divine consort of Sri Krishna at Vrindavan) emitted the sweet scent of the Nageswar champak.'

Swami Brahmananda wished to plant a tree of this flower at Dakshineswar. He asked me to find out one such plant at Bagmari and Manicktala Nursery. But no such plant was available there at the nurseries.

While at Alambazar Math Swami Ramakrishnananda asked me to procure this flower and offer it to the Master. I learnt from him that I could have it at D. Gupta's garden. One morning with Subodhananda I went along the Barrackpore Trunk Road and came to D. Gupta's garden. The gardeners there said, 'You may have it at Satpukur Garden.'

To the north of the main road leading to Ghughudanga station lies the Satpukur Garden. In no garden in the neighbourhood of Calcutta the flower could be found. I went alone to the Satpukur Garden.

Satpukur

It would not be out of place to give here some particulars about the Satpukur Garden.

Fifty or sixty years back, like the Indian Museum and the Alipur Zoological Garden, the Satpukur Garden too was a pleasant sight and a place for recreation for the people, specially for children. They were accustomed to repairing to the Satpukur Garden on Saturdays after school and having a jolly time of it there.

The then owner of the Satpukur Garden of the famous Mullicks was Syam Mullick. There were seven tanks connected with one another by aqueducts and so it was appropriately called the Satpukur Garden (Sāt-seven, pukur-tank). Over the aqueduct there was a fine-looking bridge. The Hindusthanis called it the *'Sāt tālāokā bāgichā.'* We saw a dark black tiger in the Zoo there. The boys made faces at it and shouted before its cage but the tiger sat unmoved in a corner. But place your hand on the bars of the cage and it would wear a fierce countenance and with a jump come to the bar and growl. There was a rhinoceros in the garden, its abode was girt round with a wall breast-high. There was a small pool at the centre. As we got near the wall the rhinoceros would come up to us and eat the grass we held before it. Besides these there were a hyena and many beasts and birds.

They would open the parlour to those who had permits from the masters.

Another object of attraction at the Satpukur Garden was a Gorakhdhandha (a labyrinth). Varieties of such labyrinths were designed by Guru Gorakhnath. I have seen some of them made of iron with the monks of Gorakhnath's sect. It is a sort of an intricate puzzle. In popular language it is called Golakdhandha. No such thing was to be found elsewhere in Calcutta. The labyrinth was made of thick Mehedi hedges. At the centre there was a stand with a dome on it. Once one got into it it would not be possible to come out in less than two hours or three. Boys wandered through it for a long time with the dome for

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their goal, which they fail to reach. It was not possible to scale the hedges too. So, when people got into it and found no way out they were much bewildered.

At the Satpukur Garden I was directed by the gardeners to the Nageswar champak tree. But it had not yet blossomed. The gardeners said that I could have flowers if I came seventeen or eighteen days afterwards.

I determined not to go back to the Math without securing the flower. In the interval I toured in some villages of the Barasat subdivision and studied the local conditions. In some village I spent a night and in another a day. The villages I saw in these seventeen days were overgrown with weeds and fruit trees like mango, berry, jack fruit, and the tanks supplying drinking water were full of moss. Countless are such bogs in the villages. The milkmen that daily visit Calcutta mix this water with hundreds of maunds of milk they supply. In this tour among the villages I spoke about the elementary rules of hygiene.

On the eighteenth day I came back to the Satpukur Garden to find the Nageswar champak tree bending with nice sweet-scented flowers and with bees hovering around with their low humming. My joy knew no bounds. I eagerly longed for the moment when I would place the flowers at the blessed feet of the Master. A gardener discovered me and ejaculated in joy, 'All hail, your holiness. It is wonderful that you have come just in time. If you were late by a day or two, the flowers would all drop off.' He handed over to me a large bag of plantain leaf filled with a goodly number of Nageswar champak. I held it on my head and lost no time in coming to the Math. Hearing of my travel incognito for more than a fortnight and receiving a heap of the flower Ramakrishnananda was filled with surprise and joy simultaneously.

Halishahar

At the repeated call of the sons of the late Siromani; Swami Ramakrishnananda asked me to have a trip to Halishahar. There at the home of the late Siromani I stayed a few days. I had also a keen desire to see the seat of the saint Ramprasad, the darling of Kali (the Primal Energy of Brahman). The children of the Siromani found in me their most cherished object. The attentions they paid me were so great.

Next I came to the place of penance of Ramprasad. I found that the Gāb tree from which he, in a trance, had plucked lotuses to be offered to the divine Mother's feet, was still there by his dilapidated hut. Mother Kali was still worshipped there every year.

I had a dip in Tribeni on Makar Sankranti (the last day of the Bengali month of Magh, the middle of January, the day of the sun's passing from Capricorn to Aquarius). Then I came back to the Math.

(To be continued)

RANI RASMANI

SUMALI MENON

Anybody who has read the life of Sri Ramakrishna is sure to have read a little about Rani Rasmani too. Because, it was the temple she built on the Ganges at Dakshineswar that became the stage, where the main scenes in the drama of Sri Ramakrishna's life were enacted.

Rajchandra Das, a very rich man, was the husband of Rani Rasmani. They were fishermen (Kaivarta) by caste. They had four daughters, namely Padmamani, Kumari, Karunamayi and Jagadamba Dasi. When the Rani was forty-four years old, her husband passed away bequeathing a huge property in the form

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of money and lands. The Rani was an extremely efficient lady and as such she herself managed the property, thenceforth. She was very noble and had many sterling qualities, the most striking among them being her ardent and intense devotion to 'Mother Kali'. Her first three daughters were married. In her third son-in-law, Mathura Mohan Biswas or Mathuranath she found a competent assistant in the management of the property. But the third daughter, the wife of Mathuranath, departed from the world leaving an only son. Both the Rani and Mathuranath felt extreme sorrow at the loss, but as the Rani didn't want to lose such an excellent and efficient man like Mathuranath, she married her fourth daughter, Jagadamba to him. Once more she felt that her property would be well taken care of and also that her youngest daughter got a virtuous husband.

She had an ardent desire to visit Kasi and pay homage to Lord Viswanath and Mother Annapurna. She had even set apart a huge amount for this purpose. But due to the heavy responsibility of the management of her property, she had to put off fulfilling this desire indefinitely. When she found Mathuranath was quite efficient to handle the affairs, she decided to start for Kasi. She arranged about 120 boats, big and small, with all necessary equipment and people. But the night previous to her departure, she had a strange dream. 'Mother Kali', her chosen deity, appeared before her and asked her to give up the trip. She was also instructed to build a temple for Her on the banks of the Ganges and arrange for Her daily worship and food offering. This being done the dream revealed, the Divine Mother would manifest Herself there. Some say that the Rani had already started on the trip and that she had the dream on the Ganges. Anyhow, Rasmani was extremely happy at this Divine injunction and so felt least sorry in giving up her long cherished desire. She started searching a suitable land for building the temple but couldn't get one easily. She was prepared to pay any amount for the land, which she thought, was fit for the purpose. At last, one spacious plot on the eastern side of the Ganges was purchased and she soon started building the temple. A row of twelve temples for Lord Siva, a temple for Sri Radhagovinda and one for Mother Kali at the extreme south of the land were erected on the plot. Later, Sri Ramakrishna used to say that the place was best suited for the worship of Kali as it had a convex surface like the back of a tortoise. The Rani laid out a beautiful garden and excavated a big tank on the site.

With the progress of the construction of the temple, Rani got the image of Kali too made. The image with four hands, holds a human head in one and a sword in another and with the other two hands blesses the devotees and assures safety from fear. She stands on the breast of Siva lying on a silver thousand petalled lotus. This image the Rani kept locked in a big box and observed severe austerities from the time the image was ordered to be made. The temple and images were completed and the Rani was looking for an auspicious day for installation. But unfortunately the almanac did not predict one in the near future. When days were passing in this way one night the Rani dreamt that the image was sweating and the Divine Mother was asking her, 'How long would I be locked thus. I feel suffocated!' So the Rani couldn't wait any longer. She chose the day of 'Snanayatra' for the installation of the image.

All the arrangements were over. The installation was to be done. But she came to feel that she, being a low caste woman, no Brahmin would come forward to do her service by installing the image and undertaking regular worship. She fervently prayed to the Divine Mother to show her a way. She asked the opinion of pundits regarding the worship but got no favourable reply. But, being a woman of great faith in the Providence she did not lose heart easily. She increased her efforts to elucidate the opinion of the scriptures by inviting Brahmin pundits and writing to them. At last a ray of hope came through a letter from Ramkumar Bhattacharya (of Calcutta). Ramkumar who was well learned in the shas-

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tras and an ardent devotee of God had written that if the Rani made a gift of the property to a brahmin and then installed the Devi in the temple and made arrangements about the offering of cooked food, it will be in conformity with the principles of the shastras. And if this was done the brahmins and high caste people could take 'prasad' from the temple. The Rani was overjoyous at this prescription and decided to consecrate the temple in the name of her Guru and with his permission manage the property endowed for the maintenance of the temple. She circulated this opinion among all the pundits. They were not impressed with the idea and said that no brahmins would go to the temple and partake of prasad from there.

The adamant Rani resolved to do as Ramkumar had suggested. There was no difficulty in getting priests for the Siva and Radhakrishna temples. But getting a priest for the Kali temple proved another obstacle. She had heard that Ramkumar was a competent man and decided to seek his help. She sent a letter to him, through a messenger named Maheschandra, in which she wrote that she was extremely grateful to him for helping her by giving the opinion about the consecration of the temple. But she would again most humbly request him to go over and perform the installation of the Goddess. The messenger also explained to him the situation and told him that he would have to officiate as the priest until a competent person was available. Ramkumar complied with the request of the Rani, went to Dakshineswar and installed the Devi there, on the appointed day. For a few days, he did the job thinking that he would go back when a suitable man took his place. But due to the extremely nice and respectful behaviour and loving importunities of Rani Rasmani and Mathurnath, Ramkumar decided to stay on permanently.

Ramkumar's younger brother was Gadadhar, later known as Sri Ramakrishna, because of whom the Dakshineswar Kali temple was known to the outside world. Both the brothers were living in Calcutta until Ramkumar came to Dakshineswar. Gadadhar also came to see and attend the grand celebration of the installation of Goddess Kali. Young, energetic Gadadhar who was 18 years old then, left the place the same evening thinking that his brother would follow him soon, after a few days. But it did not turn out as he thought. For sometime he waited and one day he went to see Ramkumar so that he could ask his brother the reason for his continuing his service. As a result of the conversation he found that Ramkumar was going to stay there, leaving his school at Calcutta. He was shocked to hear it. Because he found that what Ramkumar was doing was quite contrary to the habit of his saintly father, who never accepted even gifts from sudras, not to speak of doing worship for them. He argued with his brother only to get some scriptural laws supporting the former's views. The boy was not satisfied. At last Ramkumar suggested that they would take recourse to the 'leaf of impartiality' and settle the matter. Gadadhar agreed and when it was drawn Ramkumar had won. So, there ended the matter and they started living there. But Gadadhar would not take 'prasad' from the temple. According to his brother's advice he took the necessary articles from the temple store and cooked his own food on the bank of the Ganges the water of which, he used to say, purified everything. But this kind of self-cooking of the food did not go on for long.

A few days after the consecration of the temple, there came a youth, probably of the same age as Gadadhar. He was a prominent actor in the drama of Sri Ramakrishna's life. It was Hriday Ram Mukhopadhyaya, later known as Hriday, the nephew of Ramkumar and Gadadhar. He came there in search of a job, since he knew that his uncles were there and so it was easy for him to get on with them. Gadadhar was very happy to have Hriday with him and since then, both were always together except at the time of midday meals, for Hriday did not hesitate to take 'prasad' from the temple.

Mathuranath, the Rani's son-in-law, noticed Gadadhar in the precincts of the temple and was very much impressed with his handsome

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features, simplicity and steadfast devotion. So, he decided to engage him in the worship in one of the temples and suggested it to Ramkumar. Ramkumar told him about his peculiar mentality and behaviour and discouraged Mathuranath. Though he kept silent for the time being, he resolved to fulfil his desire. Gadadhar would always avoid Mathur Babu whenever he saw him in the temple precincts, fearing that the latter would press him to do some job in the temple which meant bondage. One day Gadadhar was meditating on the bank of the Ganges, keeping an image of Siva before him. Mathur Babu, who happened to come there, saw Gadadhar in deep meditation and so went near him. He was astonished to see the beautiful image of Siva. When Gadadhar opened his eyes after meditation, Mathur Babu asked him who the sculptor of the image was. He was surprised to learn that it was Gadadhar himself and requested that the image be given to him.

On another occasion when Gadadhar was talking with Hriday, Mathur Babu happened to come to the temple and seeing them there, sent for the former. Gadadhar hesitated when Hriday asked the reason, Gadadhar said that it was for asking him to be the priest of a temple that he was being called and that he himself had no idea to be bound by any ties. For he said if he accepted the job, he would have to look after the costly jewels on the image and if by chance some of them were lost he would be responsible for them. He also said if Hriday would take the responsibility of taking care of the jewels, then he would accept the job. Now, Hriday who was waiting for a chance soon agreed to this. Gadadhar went to Mathur Babu, and explained the whole situation. On condition that Hriday will be responsible for the jewels Gadadhar accepted the request of Mathur Babu. Mathur was very glad. Henceforward Gadadhar used to dress the image of Kali and Hriday started assisting him and Ramkumar.

By this time, Gadadhar had started liking the beautiful environment of Dakshineswar temple more and more and it so charmed him that he forgot about home and other things. He would stroll in the garden on the bank of the Ganges with Hriday and enjoy the beauty of nature. So, with the abovesaid agreement, Gadadhar decided to do the job in the temple which relieved Ramkumar greatly. Now, the elder brother thought it wise to get Gadadhar initiated into Sakti worship and soon it was done. So, hereafter, Gadadhar could do the worship of Kali. In all, Ramkumar stayed at Dakshineswar for one year, at the end of which he left for home. In the absence of Ramkumar, Gadadhar had to take the charge of priesthood of Kali and as Ramkumar passed away the priesthood came on him permanently. His intense devotion to God and utter lack of interest in worldly things greatly impressed Rani Rasmani and Mathur Babu. They felt that Mother Kali was manifesting Herself in the image more and more expressly as She had promised. Gadadhar was a sweet singer and as a result of deep meditation used to have trances. His devotion started flowing out in the form of songs and sincere prayers to the Devi to grant him Her vision.

During this time the beautiful image of Radhagovinda fell down as the priest was taking it to the retiring room, as a result one of the legs of the image was broken. Rani Rasmani and her people were alarmed at this incident as they thought it to be a bad omen. The perplexed Rani consulted the pundits who suggested that another image be made and installed. Although the Rani obediently ordered for a second image she was not peaceful at heart. The new image was brought, but the Rani felt uneasy. At this time, Mathur Babu sought the advice of Gadadhar telling him everything. Gadadhar was in a trance and hearing the narration asked Mathur Babu whether the Rani would change her son-in-law if any of them broke his leg or whether she would make arrangements for his recovery. Why couldn't she then repair the image and continue the worship? Mathur Babu and Rani were very much struck with the simple yet forceful reply. The pundits, who heard about this, could not utter a word as they too

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thought it to be a good solution. Mathur who had personally been a witness to the artistic talents of Gadadhar requested him to mend the image, which he did. All felt happy to see that even careful scrutiny could not detect the damaged limb of the image.

Gadadhar now became known as Sri Ramakrishna. It is said that Mathur Babu gave him this name. One day when Sri Ramakrishna was worshipping Mother Kali in the temple, Rani Rasmani came there after her bath in the Ganges. She as was her wont, requested Sri Ramakrishna to sing a few songs about the Divine Mother. Sri Ramakrishna, in his melodious voice started singing devotional songs but suddenly stopped and started rebuking the Rani for allowing her thoughts to wander away from the lotus feet of the Mother, to a law suit pending in the court. The Rani felt very much ashamed for having been unsteady of devotion. Everybody present at this occurrence was convinced that Sri Ramakrishna had gone mad and decided to punish him for insulting the Rani. But the devoted Rani silenced them saying that he was right in doing so and that it was the Divine Mother Herself who punished her.

Rani Rasmani lived for six years more after the consecration of the temple—the fulfilment of her long cherished desire. But in her last days she was worried about her eldest daughter having not signed the deed of settlement regarding the maintenance of the temple.

Before a few days of her passing away, Rani Rasmani came to her house on Adiganga at Kalighat. While the end was approaching, she saw many lights lighted and asked the bystanders to remove them. She said that the Divine Mother in all Her glory was standing before her and that those lights were hopelessly dim compared to the bright but sweet light emanating from Her. She was extremely happy to see the Divine Mother and told the Mother about her anxiety at Padma's not signing the deed. She was brought to the sands of the Ganga and as the jackals were howling announcing the presence of the Divine Mother her soul quietly passed away to the divine realm.

CAN THE GOD OF RELIGION BE IDENTIFIED WITH THE ABSOLUTE OF PHILOSOPHY ?

SUSIL KUMAR MAITRA

Religion applies the term, God, to a self-existent, supreme personal Being who is the creator of the world of finite things and beings, on whom the existence, fortune and destiny of men depend and to whom therefore men owe homage and obedience.

The term, Absolute, is applied both in science and philosophy to one absolute and unconditioned reality as the ultimate ground of the existence, co-ordination and systematic unity of all things.

Now it is argued by Agnostics like Spencer that the Absolute of Philosophy cannot be identified with the God of Religion. For (1) God as conceived in religion, is a Personal Self-conscious Being related in moral and other relations to finite beings. But the Absolute of metaphysics cannot be known at all as it is beyond all conditions and therefore cannot be described either as a Personal Being or as an Impersonal Power. (2) Further, if it be known as the Absolute, it can be known only as bereft of self-consciousness and Personality. To be self-conscious implies consciousness of a non-self in distinction from which consciousness of self is possible. But the Absolute comprises everything within itself and has nothing outside itself in distinction from which it can be conscious of itself.

Both the above mentioned objections arise

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from a mistaken notion of the Absolute. The Absolute is no doubt the Unconditioned, but only as the Ground of, and therefore comprising within itself, all possible conditions. Hence to know the conditioned is also to know the unconditioned ground of all that is conditioned. Hence the Absolute cannot be an unknowable. Further as personal beings we distinguish ourselves as persons from our own mental states. Therefore self-consciousness in our case does not require distinction from anything outside ourselves. In the same way, the self-consciousness of the Absolute as a Person does not require anything outside the Absolute, as the Absolute can be conscious of itself in distinction from the world which it creates and sustains within itself.

Another agnostic objection to the idea of the Absolute as a Personal Rational Being or God is the existence of evil and irrationality in the world. If the Absolute were the same as the God of religion, why should there be so much evil and irrationality in the world? If the world be the creation of God as an Absolute Person, who is rational and all-good, why should there be death, disease and moral evil, not to speak of the physical evil of earthquakes, floods, violent tempests, etc.? The reply to this objection is that moral evil is due to the freedom with which God has endowed finite spirits, and physical evil is a stimulus to creatures to overcoming the resistance of nature by knowledge and science.

'RESIST NOT EVIL'

K. R. R. SASTRY

Temples, mosques, and churches have *institutionalised* religion. They are projections of faith in the phenomenal plane. If ever a great 'individual ideal' was misunderstood in a thousand ways it is this great doctrine of Non-resistance. What the Hindus evolved as highest individual Dharma *Ahimsa paramo dharmah,* Christ stated 'Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but I say unto you that ye resist not evil.'

Doctrine misunderstood. Count Leo Tolstoi wrote in *What I believe,* 'Can a Christian, by taking his share of service in the army prepare himself to murder men and even actually murder them?'

In a bona fide communication to Mahatma Gandhi this writer wrote, '*Ahimsa* has never been a rule of State.' The Mahatma pleaded in his reply from Wardha dated 11-11-1944 for *patience* and stated that 'he was not a saint in any sense'.

Christ in the light of Vedanta. To call his teachings immoral, useless, invalid or inconsistent is cheap cynicism. In the light of Vedanta and the Gita, Christ is being truly understood. A mighty intellect who rambled in the groves of Vedanta, B. R. Rajam Iyer, characterized the Gita 'as a conversation between every man and God.'

The commandment of Jesus '*is an individual ideal and not meant for the society at large*'.

Tested by Life. A, a stronger man, gives B a blow. B does not resist it but goes home cursing A. Is this in any sense *moral*? A's neighbour's house is being robbed by ruffians. Is A to keep quiet? A woman is being outraged, by a scamp before A's eyes. She cries for help. What is A to do?

Let us turn in humility to Vedanta. Dharmaputra returned in the quest set for him by Sri Krishna without finding any wicked man. As Swami Vivekananda stated, 'Life is neither good nor evil... Fire by itself is neither good nor evil'.

Sri Rama before administering the mortal blow to Ravana gave him a *last chance* to correct himself.

Do your duty. Ideas of good and bad are

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limited. Do what the situation requires. This is the central lesson of the Gita. In such a setting, one gets out of the cobwebs of doubt and putting his trust in God *does his duty* as Arjuna in the battle-field. *Ahimsa,* which is always to be honoured by a *Sanyasi,* gets its limitations to the house-holder. One has to *act well his part*; there all the honour lies.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

The Editorial on the *Adhyatma Ramayana* was broadcast by the All-India Radio, Madras on 28th March, 1961. It is being reproduced with the kind permission of the Station Director.

Dr. K. B. R. Rao is a Professor in Mahatma Gandhi Memorial College, Udipi.

Sri T. V. Venkataramanan, M.A., is a research scholar in the Madras University.

Miss S. Kalpagam, B.A., is from Madura.

Srimati M. A. Rukmini, recently deceased, was an Advocate of Madras.

'Reconstructing India' forms part of an *Editorial* by Swami Ashokananda in the *Prabuddha Bharata,* March, 1928.

Sri Natavarlal Dave is Secretary, Charutar Vidyamandal and of Ramakrishna Seva Mandir, Vallabh Vidyanagar, Gujarat.

Prof. M. K. Venkatarama Iyer is a retired Professor of Philosophy, Annamalai University.

The reminiscences of Swami Akhandanandaji has been translated by Sri Narayan Chandra Bhattacharya of Berhampore, West Bengal.

Srimati Sumali Menon is from Tellicherry.

Dr S. K. Maitra, M.A., Ph.D., P.R.S., previously Professor of Mental and Moral Science in the Calcutta University, is now Dean of The Institute of Higher Studies, Falakata, Coochbehar.

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RECONSTRUCTING INDIA

Reconstruction of India is speedily going on. Though the article reproduced in this issue with this caption was written long ago, some of the suggestions for the 'form' of this reconstruction will be found very useful. Much work is being done in the villages through the Community Development projects, National Extension centres and also the Panchayats. Extensive powers to the village bodies are being given to tackle all local problems. A fillip is given by creating some basic institutions for introducing amenities as well as for focussing public attention on the local needs and problems. The programme is a grand one. There is, of course, criticism against bureaucratization of these schemes and non-participation of the local people. These defects can be rectified if a band of dedicated workers with a spiritual background take up the cause. This is what the Ashrama idea can do in the present context. This can be easily added even at this stage. The problem however is of an agreed goal and an agreed formula. But if we care for harmonious and speedy development we must find them out and add the spiritual element to the materialistic ventures. It is not that its value is not realized at all. The Ashramas connected with Gandhiji, Sarvodaya and a host of others show a recognition of the ideal. Only they are too few for the vast needs of the country and are also lacking in co-ordination.

Regarding the *spirit* of reconstruction, the writer argued cogently and vigorously in the first part of the article. There is enthusiasm in India now but it must be much more and

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of a more sustained variety, endowed with self-confidence and self-dependence. But 'what is urgently needed is a clear understanding by our workers of India as a whole'. Political, economic, educational and spiritual are all useful services. But it is essential that there should be a co-ordination, though there may be decentralization. A clear idea of India as a synthetic whole, of interrelations of its various aspects, and especially of its future is urgent. A unitary synthetic consciousness among all races and creeds must be created and it can only be spiritual. Mere contracts between different groups are not enough. True nationhood consists of an inner consciousness of a common ideal, common struggle and common feeling. As Swamiji said :

> 'National Union of India must be a gathering up of its scattered spiritual forces. A nation in India must be a union of those whose hearts beat to the same spiritual tune.'

For this patriotism may not be enduring enough. Then can spiritual quest not be the motive force for all national activity? In which case the motive and the means will be as pure as possible. As a result much of the defects visible in post-war, post-independence India may be rectified. Whatever may be the form of our work and striving, the ideal and inspiration of them should be the realization of spirituality, as far as possible. Spiritual urge is common in people but the imaginary barriers will have to be removed. Vedanta with its genius for synthesis is quite fit to bring this unity. External changes also will be necessary to facilitate spiritual and social synthesis. It can be done by stressing on the essentials. Political nationality however will be quicker to achieve. But real nationhood will take a longer time to develop. To retain the spiritual ideal, India must teach the world too, so that a congenial spiritual climate is created in it. If the motive power of the new upheaval is idealistic in nature and content, it may lead the country, when material prosperity has been gained, to pure spiritual heights. This will pave the way for an enduring society with the highest reaches of culture. Individual efforts may be too meagre for the gigantic task. But their contribution will be significant if they can prepare the minds of people for accepting this noble goal and when many such individuals and groups work for achieving it, there may come a time when the entire society will find a direction and a goal.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE REALITY OF RELIGION : By Jehangir M. Shapoorjee. (Pp. 135. Ganesh & Co., Madras Private Ltd., Price Rs. 6).

This exquisitely produced monograph may well be termed a universal text book of religion and ethics, compiled by a 'common man for common men and women'. The author who has had intimate contacts with several Sufi Mystics, an account of each of whom appears in Part II, has succeeded admirably in garnering the basic tenets of religion and philosophy according to every school of persuasion. Exceedingly worthwhile is a condensed substance of the world's greatest teachers at pp. 52 to 56.

There is something arresting in the way he retails metaphysical truths. For instance speaking of the Divine Omnipotence, he points out to the working of the Universal law governing the movements of the Stars, the Earth and indeed of every member of the animal and vegetable kingdom. Human beings have one particular form, but he justly asks, among the millions and millions, are there two that are identical from head to foot? (p. 6).

Worship by rituals, he maintains is the first rung in the ladder of spiritual progress : as such it serves an indispensable purpose. 'Religion is to mysticism what primary schools are to the Universities' (p. 15).

He emphasises the need for a Guru for spiritual aspirants thus : There are certain things which cannot be done without a guide. The life of the spirit is within that category (19). The aspirant however will be on his guard against those who collect money and presents. One who is

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unified with God prefers to give rather than to take (21).

He finds strength and solace in the law of karma. We cannot, he says, understand its exact mathematical working; but in the exercise of His infinite mercy and absolute justice, God gives to everyone who has a debit balance of his karma, a chance to live again and again as a human being till he wipes out the balance and becomes one of God's good men whose thoughts, words and deeds are always of the finest quality. In each of these lives, happiness or sorrow ensues according to the balance of his karma in the last life in addition to what he earns in this life (p. 51). Renunciation, he avers, is the renunciation of the Ego, which is the root of all wrong behaviour (p. 63).

His thesis about the grumblers is only too true: 'There is no use of grousing, minimising every gain one gets and coveting every advantage that others get, protecting every bit of one's possessions with the fervour of a mother cat, but trying to show how philanthropic one is' (p. 64).

In any society, he concludes more harm is done by lack of integrity than by lack of intelligence (77): Intelligence is the banner of worldly life; integrity is the banner of spiritual life.

S. RAJAGOPALAN

GANDHI WIELDS THE WEAPON OF MORAL POWER: (Three Case Histories). By Gene Sharp. (Pp. 316. Price Rs. 5. The Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad 14).

This is in many ways, a marvellously unique publication, and as Dr. Albert Einstein remarks so well in the foreword, it is really a work of art. The book embodies the study and research of a young American of but 25 summers, who has conceived the doctrine of Ahimsa with which Mahatma Gandhi had been inextricably associated, as an eminently workable proposition which had been successful to a degree in resolving three major conflicts or to be more accurate, catastrophies, in this country. The disquisition is thoroughly objective, authentic and extremely well documented being drawn from innumerable records both contemporaneous and historical. He had not been the worse for not being an eye-witness to the happenings in Champaran (1917—1918), in India 1930—1931 and finally the dark chapter in 1948 in New Delhi. The various sources from which the account had been drawn, have been marshalled and edited with scientific precision and accuracy. As the title aptly suggests, they are "case histories," such as the medical attendants keep up. The result is that the whole episode appears as if enacted before our very eyes; and that is saying a great deal, because the author himself was not present if not born during those happenings.

The book however has a more abiding or a deeper value. The author has done a lasting service to humanity by presenting to the world the philosophy of a man who had sought to combine the influence of moral power and love, with non-violent strategy and techniques on a mass scale, which in India had nipped in the bud, at least two of the bloodiest conflicts which would have ensued. And it is true to say that the reader after going through the book, comes out with a feeling that Ahimsa is not a mere copy book maxim, but an eminently practical weapon which could solve every problem in human existence.

S. RAJAGOPALAN.

GANDHI AND TAGORE: By Gurdial Mallik. (Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad-14.) Pages 77. Price 80 nP.

Any attempt to compare with understanding the two great sentinels who watched with care India's progress along the right path is bound to interest life-long students of the literature and writings of the two eminent souls. If Gandhiji proved himself a practical leader but nontheless a poet at heart, Gurudev Tagore also, however great a poet and dreamer, convinced everybody, who knew him by his organisational powers, how much of a real worker for the uplift of the ignorant and the idle he strove to be.

Gurdial Mallik, the author, is a genuine follower of the ideals for which the two compatriots of India worked hard and achieved more than a due measure of success in their respective spheres. There is no doubt an effective study of the mind and labours of the two philosophers would yield the richest harvest of education to aspirants who wish to continue their fruitful work.

In brief chapters, significantly entitled, you get some of the most elevating thoughts and ideas which have almost changed the face of the country from an abjectly imitative nation into a spirited and self-respecting one. If Tagore should be remembered for his tallest of claim as a poet of international reputation, he is no less recognised as a spiritual guide for the regeneration of humanity. Gandhiji too, if he led India to her great destiny in the political field, was no less conspicuous than any religious leader or spiritual head the world has hitherto known, for benefit-

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ing all the world and no one country in particular, by his soul-force and humanitarian ideals.

This tiny volume is sure to prove a compendium of great inspiration from the finest of spirits that Bharat has had in recent times in order to evoke her manhood and her potentialities for saving nations from the disturbance caused by the so-called scientific discoveries and their infernal tests. K. CHANDRASEKHARAN.

WANDERING IN THE HIMALAYAS: By Swami Tapovanji Maharaj: Translated by T. N. Kesava Pillai, Trivandrum. Pages 269.

The book under review is a translation from Malayalam of Swami Tapovanji's *Himagiri Viharam*. The translation which describes the various places of the Himalayan region breathes in spiritual air and the narration is illuminating. Books of the kind should be welcome by one and all both from the point of view of a pilgrim and a spiritual aspirant, who would find in the stillness of Nature's naked beauty the quintessence of the sacred lore.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

GEETA-LOCHAN: By B. T. Upadhyay, B.A.,LL.B., Advocate. Published by Kaivalyadham Swadhyay Mandir, Rajkot. Pages 126. Price Rs. 2.50.

The book under review is, as the author states, an attempt to translate the thought and spirit of Swami Digambarji's Geetha-Lochan in Gujarati. The book has well written sections on the chapters of the Bhagavad Gita. The author's translation and manner of expression is good and takes the readers into a dramatic narration of the set of events discussed in the various chapters of the Gita. The work deserves special mention for its usefulness and ready-reference.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

VISHVA DHARMA: By Acharya Visheshanand. Translated into English by M. S. Bhatia, M.A., B.T. Published by the Vishva Dharma Mission, New Delhi-3. Pages 283. Price Rs. 5.

The book under notice deals with the aspects of universal religion and how best man rises above himself and his personal predilections in order to contribute towards a universal religion for himself as well as for the people of the world is amply told through defined chapters of the book. The object of the publication seems more to remain a pamphlet of the Vishva Dharma Mission than a book on universal religion. The original text of the book is in Hindi.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

THE HERITAGE OF THE LAST ARHAT OR LORD MAHAVIRA: By Dr Charlotte Krause (Leipzig). Adaptation by Balchandra M. Parikh, M.A. Published by Chimanlal Kothari, 191, N. S. C. Bose Road, Madras-1. Pages 39.

The booklet is an adaptation in simple English of the lectures on the Heritage of the Last Arhat delivered in 1929 at Madras by the well-known German scholar Dr Charlotte Krause. The booklet brings out succinctly the message of Jainism and there is no doubt that the small publication brings out successfully the essential principles of Jaina philosophy. T. S. RAGHAVAN.

SAINT OF SAVANUR: By P. S. Ritti, Pleader, Savanur (Mysore). Pub. The Author. Pages 15. Price 50 nP.

This is a short life-sketch of Sri Satya Bodha Swami who was the pontiff of the Uttaradi Math during 1742-1783 A.D. The author has drawn upon original works in Sanskrit, Marathi and Persian (some published and some unpublished) and given an interesting account of the Swami's ministry, stressing on his role as a successful mediator between warring chieftains and antagonistic Mathadhipatis. There is a good deal here about the miracles performed by the saint but nothing about the nature of his contribution to the Madhva tradition. We hope the author will fill up this lacuna in his next book.

M. P. PANDIT.

TELUGU

LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF SRI RAMA TIRTHA: By Kesava Tirtha. A pocket book edition. Published by Sri Ramatirtha Sevasram, Pidugurala, Guntur, Andhra. Pp. 307. Price Rs. 5.

This is an account in Telugu of the life of Sri Rama Tirtha Swami of Punjab, a junior contemporary of Sri Vivekananda Swamiji. The life of Sri Ram was itself a saga of hard work, detachment, sacrifice and divine love. Sri Ram was a saint poet and even his speeches bear the stamp of authentic poetry, as his realisation found expression in poetic, mystic symbols and utterances and this Telugu book in colloquial style is a full and adequate representation of Sri Ram's life and teachings. Sri Ram was a mystic who plunged to the depths of the ananda aspect of the divine. Seekers after Truth, Realization and divine bliss will do well to carefully read this book, note Sri Ram's teachings and follow the

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revered master in his genuine and mystic practice. We recommend this book to the religious public of Andhra Desh for careful study.

KRISHNA BHIKSHU.

KANNADA

CHANDOGYA UPANISHAD: By Swami Adidevananda. Pub. Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Mysore. Pages 479. Price Rs. 6.

With this work Swami Adidevananda completes his classic renderings of the Ten Upanishads in Kannada. Like the previous publications in the series, the book contains the text in Kannada script, word-for-word meaning, translation and helpful notes with summaries at appropriate places, based upon the commentaries of Acharya Shankara.

There is an adequate introduction giving the background of the Upanishad which forms part of the Chandogya Brahmana of the *Tandya* branch of the Sama Veda and an accurate synopsis of the contents of the text chapter by chapter. It is fashionable to regard, especially among the Western scholars, the eight chapters of the Chandogya as products of different ages and different minds somehow put together under one title. Swamiji shows how the argument develops step by step and leads the reader most naturally through the variegated landscape of the spiritual adventure of the human soul so brilliantly portrayed in the Chandogya Upanishad. He draws attention to the several Vidyas that are expounded or hinted at in the text and succeeds in driving home the truth that the Upanishads are more of manuals of sadhana and ways of God-realisation than books of purely philosophical import. A great service worthily done.

M. P. PANDIT.

HINDI

JAPA: By Madhav Pundalik Pandita. Translation by Venkataraman. Published by Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. Pages 50. Price 50 nP.

This is the Hindi version of the book of the same name in English which was reviewed in these columns in August 1960. The same subject matter has been rendered in easy and simple Hindi which can be well understood even by South Indians who possess a Sanskrit background.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

TAMIL

MAYAN THIRUVAKKU: By A. S. P. Ayyar, I.C.S. Published by the Alliance Company, P.B. No. 617, Mylapore, Madras-4. Pages 168. Price Rs. 2.25.

This is Bhagavad Gita in a nut-shell. The contents of the chapters of the Song-Supreme have been so nicely stated, explained and annotated that the renowned author has brought to bear on it his originality and research-scholarship. The Tamil-speaking world owe a great deal to the author for this scholarly contribution, which can, without much exaggeration, occupy an important place in their daily worship of the Lord.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

SRI NILAKANTHA DIKSHITA AND HIS KAVYAS: By P. S. Krishnan, B.Sc. 18-A, Sivapuram, Tirunelveli. Published by the author at the Vani Vilas Press, Srirangam, Trichy-6. Pages 176. Price Rs. 2.

A literary estimate of the poems of Sri Nilakantha Dikshita, an eminent poet and philosopher of South Indian History of the Medieval days has been attempted by the author, who is a descendent of the poet-philosopher himself. After giving a short life history of the poet, the author clearly analyses the various aspects of his literature. Both the original and translation breathe in a fresh fervour of literary merit. The book deserves all praise and commendation of scholars.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

BENGALI

MANASOLLASA: Translated by Swami Vasishtananda Puri. Published by Sashibhushan Dutta, 166, Bow Bazar St., Calcutta-12. Pages 118. Price Re. 1.

Manasollasa is a commentary in Sanskrit on the first ten slokas of Dakshinamoorti stotra of Bhagavan Sri Sankaracharya and is traditionally believed to have been written by Sureshwaracharya, one of Sri Sankara's disciples. In these ten slokas of the Dakshinamurti stotra the truths of Vedanta are stated in a condensed form and without deep study it is not possible to get at their vast meaning. Even centuries ago this abstruseness was felt. Sureshwaracharya to make the meaning more explicit wrote this vartika in simple Sanskrit. The vartika contains 360 slokas and the translator opines that this is probably the first translation of the work that has ever been attempted in the regional languages.

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The book carries an introduction discussing the various details about the authorship of the work, the place the Dakshinamurti stotra occupies in Advaita Vedanta etc. and is very informative. The translation is in lucid Bengali and though literal does not lose its fluency of expression. The price is moderate and is a useful addition to the scriptural books in Bengali.

S. P.

PERIODICAL

KALYANA KALPATARU: The Valmiki Ramayana, Number I. Published by the Manager, Kalyana Kalpataru, P.O. Gita Press, (Gorakhpur). Pages 228. Price Rs. 2.50.

This Sanskrit-English Volume noticed herein is the well-known Ramayana of Sage Valmiki, which occupies the foremost place in the epic literature of Bharat. The author Sage Valmiki is a poet of no mean order and his work is an exquisite specimen of poetic excellence. In portrayal of lively characters and moral appeal, the poet Valmiki comes within the fold of a Mahakavi. The Gita Press has brought out the Bala Kanda of this great epic with its easy and readable English translation.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

KALYAN: Sankshipta Yogavashishta Anka: Published by Gita Press, Gorakhpur, U.P. Pages 700. Price Rs. 7.50.

The Hindi volume under notice is the condensed Yoga Vashishta which is also well-known as the Maha Ramayana. There are interesting articles on the Yoga Vashishta and its influence viewed from different angles by scholars. The book is bound to become popular for its content, presentation and get-up.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

VISHVA JYOTI: Mahapurushanka: March 1961. Published by Shri Dev Datt Shastri at the Vishveshvaranand Vedic Research Institute, P.O. Sadhu Ashram, Hoshiarpur. Pages 130. Price 75 nP.

This special Number of the Vishva Jyoti, a popular magazine in Hindi, deals with the Great Souls. There are articles dealing with the definitions of a Great Soul, saint, culture, and life itself.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

SANDIPAN (2nd Issue): Ramakrishna Mission Sikshan Mandir, Belur Math, Howrah.

This second issue of the Ramakrishna Mission Teachers' Training College (Belur) Annual magazine is quite encouraging. Particularly, the collections of important quotations on education, under the caption 'Madhukari' is indeed sweet and the next thing that attracts is Swami Premeshanandaji's illuminating reflections on some practical problems of education to-day. Hitherto unpublished lecture of Swami Virajanandaji, the sixth President of the Mission, will be found interesting.

There are a lot of problems in the uncared field of education in India and that naturally provokes our mind to know the exact thinking of these budding teachers of tomorrow in whose hand lies the future of our destiny. Of the two-thirds contributions of the students in this issue both in English and Bengali, one-third is poetry. No doubt, to build up the nation the creative mind of poets is necessary but our vision should always be tinged with the realities of life and its mission, it should be concrete.

BR. SUDHANGSHU.

SAMAJ SIKSHA (4th Year, 12th Vol. 1961): Published by Lok Siksha Parishd, Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Narendrapur, 24 Parganas, West Bengal.

It seems this Bengali monthly organ of the above named Parishad is for the spread of social work, adult education and such other cultural activities in the rural areas. The standard of writing is satisfactory, and the contents interesting and popular. One going through it is likely to feel that it is not an unhappy crop reaped too immaturely or so. It is quite in keeping with its ideal.

BR. SUDHANGSHU.

KAHANIYA MONTHLY: Seventh Annual Number: Edited by P. A. Prabhu, 32, Pelatope, Madras-4. Pages 80.

This is a cultural and story magazine. Some of the stories are rendered into English from Tamil. Rambles in Court life, As it strikes me, Know Your Luck and Book Reviews are some of its regular features.

S.

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NEWS AND REPORTS

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH, MADRAS

Charitable Dispensary: In 15 months (1960 January — 1961 March) the Dispensary treated 1,98,613 cases in both Allopathic and Homeopathic Departments. 19,502 eye, 16,268 E.N.T. and 11,235 Dental cases were treated in the respective departments. 456 patients were X-rayed and 177 were screened. 1988 different kinds of specimens were examined in the Laboratory. Medicated milk was distributed to 10,097 rickety and sickly children. Apart from the fundamental treatment mentioned above, milk was distributed to 1,35,850 under-nourished women and children. The actual receipts in 1960-61 were Rs. 28,891.74 and expenses Rs. 31,616.35 and so there was a deficit of Rs. 2,724.61. The management while thanking the contributors and friends, appeal for funds for the maintenance of the Dispensary.

Sri Rama Navami: On Sunday, April 2, 1961 at 5-45 p.m. Sri Ramanavami was observed with a lecture in English by Dr P. Nagaraja Rao, M.A.,D.Litt., Professor of Philosophy, Karnataka College, Dharwar, on the 'Message of the Ramayana.' A large gathering of devotees enjoyed the brilliant speech of the Professor, delineating the character of Sri Rama and the message of the holy book. A synopsis of the lecture will be published later.

Acharya Sankara Jayanti: The birthday of Sri Sankaracharya was observed on Sunday, April 23, 1961 at 6 p.m. with a lecture by Dr. P. Nagaraja Rao. A summary of this lecture also will be published later.

Acharya Ramanuja Jayanti: The birthday of Sri Ramanuja was observed on Sunday, April 30, 1961 at 6 p.m. with a lecture by Sri S. Sampath Kumar, B.Sc.,B.L., Advocate, Madras High Court. He forcefully defended the Visishtadvaita philosophy and gave a brilliant exposition of the views of the Acharya.

Buddha Jayanti: The Buddha Jayanti was on the 30th April. On Sunday, the 7th May there was a lecture on the life and teachings of Lord Buddha by Sri Panchapagesa Ayyar, Retired Professor of Mathematics. The lecture was well appreciated.

Sri Ramakrishna Birthday Celebration at Ponneri: Since last year, the Ramakrishna Math, Madras has been celebrating the birthday of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna in a small village mostly inhabited by Harijans and other poor people. Last year the celebration took place at Kurichi near Sunkuvarachhatram.

This year, it was celebrated with great pomp and enthusiasm at the Irulipet village, in Ponneri Taluk about 18 miles from Madras, on 2nd April, Sunday. There is a *Sri Ramakrishna Sevasram*, a small private Ashrama there, run by Br. Manikyam. The members of the Ashrama helped us in all possible ways to make the function a success.

On 2nd morning, about eight Sadhus and twenty devotees and other workers went in a lorry and car carrying foodstuff, cooking vessels etc. The venue was a spacious mango orchard where two small pandals were erected and a picture of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was tastefully decorated by the local people.

At first there was Puja accompanied by devotional songs. Afterwards, poor children of the locality were given oil bath and a procession with the nicely decorated portrait of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna went round the village accompanied by Nadaswaram and Bhajana. As the procession passed through the village, most of the householders brought offerings and performed Arati. The frontage of their houses was decorated with *kolom*. The procession came back at 12 noon when a meeting was held under the presidentship of Swami Suddhasatwananda, Manager, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore. The meeting was addressed by Swami Sarvajnanandaji, Sri Sharma, Sri O. V. Chinnaswamy, and by the Vice-President of the local Ashram in Tamil and Telugu and Br. Manikyam proposed a vote of thanks. By this time, cooking was over and in the spacious garden about 1,150 poor people, mostly Harijans, were sumptuously fed. About 200 others also took their food. The villagers also contributed to make the function a success. The celebration came to a close after the distribution of old and new clothings among very poor and helpless persons. The function gave great satisfaction to all the people concerned.

RAMAKRISHNA-SHIVANANDA MANDIRA, BARASET

The Dedication of the new Ramakrishna-Shivananda Mandira at Ramakrishna-Shivananda Ashrama in Baraset (24 Parganas, W. Bengal), birthplace of Mahapurush Maharaj Swami Shivananda was performed in the early morning of the 20th April by Swami Yatiswaranandaji, President of Bangalore Ramakrishna Ashrama with ceremonial rites and recitals of Vedic hymns in the presence of most of the Trustees of Belur Math and many other senior monks of the Ramakrishna Order from far and near. Portraits of

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Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishnadeva, Sri Ma Sarada Devi, Swami Vivekananda and Swami Shivananda were installed in the shrine. The celebrations continued for four days with a non-stop programme embodying Pujas, sacrificial rites, Saptasati Homa, recital of scriptures, devotional songs, Ramakrishna Lila-Kirtan, Rama-nama Kirtan, Kali-Kirtan, kathakata, discourses, Kali Puja, Jatra performances, processions, public meetings, Sadhu seva, and distribution of Prasad.

On the first day of the celebrations, the portraits of Swami Shivananda Maharaj, installed in the Hall (of the Baraset Government School, where the Saint had his early education, was garlanded, and the students of the school were addressed by Swami Sambuddhanandaji, President, Bombay Ramakrishna Ashrama and by the Headmaster of the institution. In the afternoon, a mammoth public meeting was held at the Ashrama and the Chairman, Swami Yatiswaranandaji, Swami Sambuddhanandaji, and Sri Saila Kumar Mukherjee spoke on the life and teachings of Mahapurush Maharaj. About 135 Sadhus of Belur Math were sumptuously entertained.

On the last day of the celebrations, a big procession of over a thousand male and female devotees carrying decorated portraits of Sri Ramakrishnadeva, Sri Ma, Swami Vivekananda, and Swami Shivananda and singing devotional songs and kirtans went round the principal streets of Baraset town. Prasad was distributed to about 16,000 visitors. In the afternoon, there was a public meeting attended by nearly three thousand people and presided over by Swami Kailashanandaji, President, Madras Ramakrishna Math. After Sri Asu De, Secretary of the Ashrama, had read the Annual Report of the Ashrama, Dr Roma Chowdhury, Swami Punyanandaji, Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Boys' Home, Rahara, and the Chairman spoke illuminatingly on the various aspects of the life and message of Swami Shivananda. The four days' programme terminated late in the night of the 23rd April with a display of fireworks followed by recitals of classical music.

Institutions and individuals participating in the functions were: Rahara R. K. Mission Boys' Home, R. K. Mission Sarada Pith of Belur, Howrah Sri Guru Sangit Parishad, Grey Street Kali Kirtan Party, Makardaha Ramakrishna Sadhanalaya, Howrah Mayer Mandir, Sri Narendra Kanjilal, Pandit Dwijapada Goswami, Swami Sambuddhananda, Prof. Tripurari Chakrabarti, Sri Surendra Nath Chakravarti Veda Shastri, Sri Ramani Kumar Dutta Gupta, Sri Sarat Banerjee, and Sri Mrigendra Mukherjee.

Special mention has to be made of the magnificent work done by the boys of the Rahara R. K. Mission Boys' Home in managing the functions for four days successively under the able guidance of their Chief, Swami Punyanandaji.

RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA, NARAYANGANJ

The Ramakrishna Ashrama, Narayanganj (Dacca), celebrated the 126th Birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna with special worship, singing of devotional songs and Vedic chanting, in the mornings from 22nd to 26th February 1961. Lantern lectures on the lives of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda, reading from the Kathamrita, a ladies' meeting, a religious conference, a students' meeting, staging dramas on the life of Sri Krishna, and reading the Bhagavata formed some of the special features of the programme in the evenings. The celebrations were well attended and many prominent citizens among whom were Begum Shufia Kamal, the famous poetess, poetess Mahmuda Khatoon Siddique; Dr Alim-Al-Razee, Hony. Principal, City Law College, Dacca, Md. Iqbal Hossain Kaviranjan, took part in the celebrations either by presiding or speaking at the various functions. The celebrations ended on 26th of Feb. with the feeding of about 5000 Darindra-Narayanas.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYAMANDIRA

The Vidyamandira at Belur Math, Howrah, is a residential College affiliated to the Calcutta University. It was started in 1941 and has been maintaining a high percentage of passes in the I.A. and I.Sc. examinations, some years the result being 100%. The general standard of the students has also been very high. Out of the 103 candidates that appeared in 1960, 81 came out successful in the first division, 20 in the second division and two in the third. The Vidyamandira has now been converted to a Ist grade college. It has got a gymnasium, and a Students' Medical Ward. It has also one N.C.C. Unit. Of late, 'the Governing Body of the Ramakrishna Mission has been pleased to authorize the Secretary of the Saradapitha to give a start to the long-contemplated University at Belur.' The Saradapitha, of which the Vidya mandira is only one of the institutions, runs at present one B.T. College, one Social Education Organisers' Training Centre, one Licentiate Engineering Department, and a Tattvamandira.

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.... Be bold and face
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease.
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XLVIII JULY 1961 No. 3

FROM THE TREE OF DIVINE LORE

There was a majestic rock by the seashore; Hanuman lightly sprang on top of it; then again and again invoking Raghuvir, the son of the Wind leaped with all his might. Like Rama's own unerring shaft so sped Hanuman on his way, and arrived in Lanka on top of a huge rock.

But Rama, the All-wise, who dwelleth in all hearts, assuming any form at will, though Himself formless, spoke thus: 'Hearken, valiant monarch of Lanka, how are we to cross the deep ocean of fathomless profundity and absolutely impassable?' Vibhishana replied: 'Hearken, Raghunayak, your arrows could burn up a thousand seas, but still, it would be better to make petition to the god of ocean. Being your family priest, he will suggest some scheme.'

'Friend, let us try it!' So saying Rama went to the shore of the salt-sea and there took His seat on the grass He had strewn.

But Ocean did not respond to prayer, though three days had been spent. Then cried Rama in fury: 'He will do me no kindness, unless he be frightened. With my fiery darts I will dry up the deep!' So saying, Rama strung His bow and let fly the terrible shaft. A burning pain ensued in the bosom of Ocean, and crocodiles, serpents and fish were burning. Then Ocean filled a golden dish with all kinds of jewels and humbly presented himself in the form of a Brahmana. Terrified Ocean clasped the Lord's feet and said:

'Pardon me, Sire, all my offence. Air, wind, fire, water and earth are all, my Lord, dull and slow to change. They have been produced by your delusive Power, and as each has been fixed by the Lord's command, so it must remain. My Lord has done well in giving me this lesson; but still, it was You, who first fixed my bounds. The Scriptures declare the Word of the Lord to be unchangeable; do then at once what seemeth You good.'

The Lord smiled to hear this humble speech and said, 'Tell me, Father, some device, how the monkey host may cross over.'

(*Ramayana*, Tr. SRINIVASA IYENGAR)

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NINE MEANS OF DEVOTION

The *Bhagavata* (VII. 5. 18) speaks of nine aspects of Bhakti in a well-known sloka.[1] They are : 1. Hearing the names of God or His Incarnation chanted or sung by others, or songs in praise of, or the narration of, His charms, pastimes and attributes. 2. Chanting or singing His names, narrating or singing His charms. 3. Remembering or thinking of His names and charms. 4. Showing respect to Him by visiting the sacred places associated with His pastimes, looking at His images or pictures depicting His pastimes, serving and keeping company with His devotees and showing respect to things connected with His memory. 5. Worship of Him in images by offering flowers, sandal paste, food, etc. 6. Bowing down before Him or His images at the place of worship. 7. Serving Him in the attitude of a devoted servant. 8. Comradeship — to think that one is His loving and intimate friend and He too is such, and to behave towards Him accordingly, generally through His images. 9. Resignation to the Lord — devoting oneself entirely to His services. According to the devotional schools these steps belong to vaidhi or scriptural devotion. Through their practice an intimate feeling for God generates, which leads to Prema Bhakti.

The *Adhyātma Rāmāyana* which is sometimes described as a Bhagavata Ramayana, speaks of nine other means of devotion. Whereas Sri Rama is the Incarnation in the Ramayana, Sri Krishna is so in the Bhagavata, about whose glory these books speak of. Contemplation of God and these Incarnations are of the same value, is the considered opinion of the scriptures. The Adhyatma Ramayana is based on the non-dualistic philosophy and so considers jnana-misra-bhakti as the most profitable spiritual discipline. It gives high priority to devotion as a sādhana, which ultimately leads to knowledge and release. These nine steps to devotion has been given as the advice of Sri Rama to Tāpasi Sabari who said that she was quite unfit to have His darshan being only a low-born maid. Sri Rama then replied (III. 22-30) :

> 'Manhood or womanhood, caste or station in life does not give the fitness to worship Me ; devotion alone is capable of doing so. Even with sacrifice, gifts, austerity or study of the Vedas and performing rituals, men are not able to see Me, if they are not devoted to Me. So I shall tell you in brief the means of that Bhakti. Contact of holy men is said to be the first sādhana. The second is talk and discussion about Me. The third is repeated thinking about My qualities. Explaining the scriptures dealing with My words is the fourth sadhana. Unreservedly to worship the Teacher as Myself is the fifth. Pure nature, yama, niyama, etc. and steadfastness in My daily worship constitute the sixth sadhana. Repeating of My mantra with other accessories is the seventh. Reverencing good devotees, seeing Me in all beings, detachment in external things along with sama, etc. are the eighth. Discrimination about Truth is the ninth. These are the nine means of Bhakti. Whoever, man, woman or other creatures, are endowed with these means of devotion will have Bhakti along with Prema. As soon as this loving devotion is generated there is the realization of My Nature. Whoever realizes My Nature gets released in this life itself. Hence know Bhakti to be the first means of Mukti. Those

[1] श्रवणं कीर्तनं विष्णोः स्मरणं पादसेवनम्।
अर्चनं वन्दनं दास्यं सख्यमात्मसमर्पणम्॥

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who are first endowed with the means of Bhakti, gradually perform the other means too. So they can have Bhakti and then Mukti.'[2]

The scheme of Bhakti prescribed in the above slokas is in line with the well-known views of scriptures and saints. Sadhu-sanga or contact of holy men is very important to generate detachment and devotion. By their association alone, the amorphous spiritual ideas of an aspirant become crystallized. When study, ritual and the like cannot satisfy us, it is the advanced sadhakas who can transmit a little of their conviction, zeal and steadfastness to us. About its importance, this Ramayana says in the words of Agastya :

> Contact of holy men is the root of Release. . . . For by holy company a taste develops in hearing about Him ; from it arises devotion to the Eternal God ; from devotion clear knowledge, and from the latter Release arises. This is the path followed by the wise.[3] (III. 3. 36 & 39-40)

The second means is talking and discussing about God and His Incarnations. The exploits of Sri Rama in the Ramayana, of Sri Krishna in the Bhagavata are all very inspiring and ennobling. We get clear ideas about spiritual verities through them. When virtue declines and vice prevails, the Incarnations come down to the world to regenerate and reinstate the religious values. By constantly handling these ideas we become convinced and one-pointed attention develops. About the importance of hearing and discussing about the exploits of the Avatara, Sri Krishna says :

> He who thus knows, in true light, My divine birth and action, leaving the body, is not born again : he attains to Me, O Arjuna. (*Gita* IV. 9)

The third means is repeated thinking about the qualities of God and His Incarnations. The Atman is repeatedly to be heard, thought upon and contemplated, says the Upanishad. After a theoretical understanding of the real nature of God, man and things, it should be imprinted on our mind by deep reflection to remove the hoary hold of Maya. As you think, so you become, is the principle. By repeated thinking of the sattvic qualities we moreover imbibe those qualities which are essential for spiritual progress. Patanjali the great scientific writer of yoga says that the Highest can be realized, samadhi can be obtained

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[2] ...सङ्क्षेपाद्वक्ष्येऽहं भक्तिसाधनम् ।
सतां संगतिरेवात्र साधनं प्रथमं स्मृतम् ॥
द्वितीयं मत्कथालापस्तृतीयं मद्गुणैरणम् ।
व्याख्यातृत्वं मद्वचसां चतुर्थं साधनं भवेत् ॥
आचार्योपासनं भद्रे मद्बुद्ध्यामायया सदा ।
पञ्चमं पुण्यशीलत्वं यमादि नियमादि च ॥
निष्ठा मत्पूजने नित्यं षष्ठं साधनमीरितम् ।
मम मन्त्रोपासकत्वं साङ्गं संप्तममुच्यते ॥
मद्भक्तेष्वधिका पूजा सर्वभूतेषु मन्मतिः ।
बाह्यार्थेषु विरागित्वं शमादिसहितं तथा ॥
अष्टमं नवमं तत्त्वविचारो मम भामिनि ।
एवं नवविधा भक्तिः साधनं यस्य कस्य वा ॥
स्त्रियो वा पुरुषस्यापि तिर्यग्योनिगतस्य वा ।
भक्तिः सञ्जायते प्रेमलक्षणा शुभलक्षणे ॥
भक्तौ सञ्जातमात्रायां मत्तत्त्वानुभवस्तदा ।
ममानुभवसिद्धस्य मुक्तिस्तत्रैव जन्मनि ॥
स्यात्तस्मात्कारणं भक्तिर्मोक्षस्येति सुनिश्चितम् ।
प्रथमं साधनं यस्य भवेत्तस्य क्रमेण तु ॥

[3] साधुसंगतिरेवात्र मोक्षहेतुरुदाहृता ।
सत्संगमो भवेद् यर्हि त्वत्कथाश्रवणे रतिः ।
समुदेति ततो भक्तिस्त्वयि राम सनातने ॥
त्वद्भक्तांवुपपन्नानां विज्ञानं विपुलं स्फुटम् ।
उदेति मुक्तिमार्गोऽयमाद्यश्चतुरसेवितः

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through contemplation of God — *Isvara-pranidhānāt vā.*

The fourth sadhana is explaining the scriptures dealing with the words of God and His Incarnations. Swādhyāya and Pravacana, studying the scriptures oneself and explaining them to others have been the recognized methods even from the Upanishadic age. In trying to explain, things become clearer.

The fifth means is the worship of the Guru as God Himself. This idea has been accepted by all the systems and more strongly by the devotees. The Vedas declare that knowledge must be received from a Guru. No amount of study is of any avail. And to make the Guru's words most fruitful there must be great faith in his words of wisdom. About the importance of the Guru, Swami Vivekananda says :

> 'This insufficiency of books to quicken spiritual growth is the reason why, although almost every one of us can speak most wonderfully on spiritual matters, when it comes to action and the living of a truly spiritual life, we find ourselves so awfully deficient. To quicken the spirit the impulse must come from another soul. The person from whose soul such impulse comes is called the Guru — the teacher; and the person to whose soul the impulse is conveyed is called the Sishya — the student.'

The sixth sadhana consists of a pure life, daily worship and practice of the eightfold yoga. This yoga has been forcefully presented by Patanjali, which has been incorporated by almost all the systems in their discipline. Yama and niyama are external and internal cleanliness, āsana is steady posture necessary for long meditation forgetting the body and prānāyāma is control of vital breath for physical and psychical purification and strengthening. The next three steps constitute concentration. Pratyāhāra is trying to gather the mind, dhāranā is focussing on a point or the chosen Deity and dhyāna is to remain in the thought without break, and samādhi is the mastery of the mind and its complete mergence. To bring the mind under control elaborate formal worship has been prescribed. The Adhyatma Ramayana in a different chapter gives a detailed description of it and this method is even now prevalent.

The seventh means consists of repeating the mantra bearing the name of the chosen Deity. This has acquired the greatest importance in most of the disciplines. The Divine formula received from a Guru has special potency and by repetition of it all spiritual benefits are derived. Many are the sayings regarding its supreme efficacy. A well-known verse asserts that it is by japa alone without doubt, the spiritual success is achieved.

The eighth sadhana according to this book consists of a few things. Showing respect to good devotees of God has been accepted as part of the spiritual discipline, for by this and by contacting them we imbibe the divine qualities they possess. Seeing God in all beings is an advanced stage of sadhana. The Gita points out that the samesighted yogi sees God in everything. When all creation is His or He manifests Himself as all beings, it is quite in the fitness of things that this recognition itself should be a part of sadhana. Detachment in external things or vairagya is an equally important discipline. This is the other side of seeing God in everything. Vairagya and practice are the methods by which the Highest is achieved, says the Gita. Sama, dama, etc. also are included in this sadhana. The Advaita system speaks of six treasures of sadhana, viz. sama, dama, uparati, titikshā, sraddhā and samādhāna — controlling the inter-

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nal and external organs, withdrawing from the senses, bearing all sufferings without any reaction, faith in the words of the Guru and the Vedanta and concentration of the mind on the Goal.

The ninth means of devotion consists of discrimination about Truth. It is an important discipline according to Vedanta. In fact, according to some this is the only sadhana that is necessary.

These are the ninefold means of Bhakti, says the Adhyatma Ramayana. By practising these, Bhakti is perfected and from Vaidhi Bhakti, the aspirant passes to Prema Bhakti, full of love and void of motive. As a result, Brahmajnana dawns, showing that Bhakti is the root of Mukti. Thus in the above-quoted slokas, the Adhyatma Ramayana harmonizes the claims of the followers of Jnana and Bhakti, of knowledge and devotion, of discrimination about real nature of things and worship of the Deity, as also of the Impersonal and the Personal. Pure knowledge and pure devotion are the same, said Sri Ramakrishna, and by the realization of the one the other also is realized. The modern prophet of harmony thus substantiates the position of the author of the Adhyatma Ramayana. By satisfying the intellectual and emotional elements in our nature, it is sure, this ninefold discipline will be able to give the maximum spiritual benefit.

MAYA IS NEITHER AN ILLUSION NOR A SUNYATA

SWAMI PRAJNANANANDA

Swami Vivekananda says :

> 'Most of you are by this time familiar with the idea of maya and know that it is sometimes erroneously explained as illusion, so that when the universe is said to be maya, that also has to be explained as being illusion.'[1]

Swami Abhedananda too argues in similar way. He says :

> 'In Vedanta the *Prakrti* of the Sankhya philosophy is called *maya*, which is the divine Energy of the Absolute Brahman. *Maya* does not mean illusion, as some scholars think, but it is that power which produces time, space and causation, as also the phenomenal appearances which exist on the relative plane.'[2]

Sankara also states that *maya* is the divine energy of *Isvara* ('*paramesa-sakti*'). Citsukhacarya says : '*Māyā-sabdena ca parameśvara-jnānasaktireva tat-svarupabhutāyāh samkirtanāt. Tadevamanirvacaniyajnānam laksanapramanayo - rasambhavāttādrg - jnana-mastityetadevājnānamiti siddham*',[3] i.e. he means thereby that the word '*maya*' signifies the energy of the supreme Lord of the universe, and that energy is nothing but the consciousness itself in essence. That energy is indescribable, and so it cannot be proved by anything. But still it exists as non-knowledge or nescience.

The Vaisnava philosophers also admit the divine potency (*sakti*) of *Isvara*, but this potency is real to them and not changeable. Jiva Gosvami describes all the phases of the divine energy of *Isvara* in his *Paramarthasandarbha*. According to him, *maya* as *sakti* has been classified into *jiva-maya*, which is called *nimitta-maya*, and *guna-maya*, known as *upadana-maya*. *Maya* is the *sakti* that causes creation, preservation and destruction of the world (*srsti-sthityantakarini*). The function of the *jiva* or *nimitta-maya* is two-fold, consisting of science (*vidya*) and nescience (*avidya*), the

[1] *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. II, p. 105.

[2] *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*, edited by Prof. Muirhead and Dr Radhakrishnan, p. 57. cf. also *India & Her People*, p. 42.

[3] *Citsukhi* (Nirnaya-sagara ed.), p. 57.

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first causing emancipation and the second one, bondage. Thus *vidya* is the gateway for the ingress of this implicit consciousness. The *avidya* or nescience too has two-fold function, namely (i) *avaranatmika* i.e. which causes the concealment of the true nature of the jiva, and (ii) *viksepatmika,* or that which acts as a source of destruction, and for that reason *maya* has been called by Jiva Gosvami as *gunamayi*, and the *Gita* designates it as *trigunatmika*.[4]

Sankara has admitted the apparent reality or existence of *maya* on the basis of the theory of superimposition (*vivartavada*), meaning thereby that the absolute Brahman as if assumes the form of the relative world of space and time, and for this reason he posits *maya* neither as absolutely non-existent (*tuccha*) like the sky-flower, nor as an illusive existence (*pratibhasika-satta*), and so *maya* or the world of nescience is not an illusion. Dr Radhakrishnan has given his considered views on the point when he deals with the topic : 'Is the World an Illusion ?' in his *History of Indian Philosophy*.[5] He has observed that the doctrine of *maya* or *avidya,* with its subjective note, suggests a misleading view of the nature of the phenomenal world that it is an illusion, a creation of the mind. Unreal the world is, illusory it is not. While discussing about *maya*, Swami Abhedananda has also pointed out that *maya* does not mean illusion. Illusion is a word wrongly adopted in translation. This word gives a false idea to the Western mind. *Maya* is really an invisible energy which is inseparable from God.[6] Well has it been said by Dr P. T. Raju :

> 'The conception of *maya* in Advaita philosophy is so technical and full of nuances that the general mind is apt to misunderstand it easily. In ordinary parlance the word has so many associations with magic, legerdemain, deceit, and hallucinations, that the Advaita philosophy, in spite of its popularity, cannot be said to have been rightly understood. The conception of *maya* has been strongly attacked continuously even from the time of Sankara. . . . A very common misunderstanding of the doctrine of *maya* is that it teaches that the world is a mere illusion, a shadow, or a dream that has no substantiality. . . . Advaita does not teach the shadowy nature of this world, nor that we should be sorry for our birth here.'[7]

Dr Hiralal Haldar has also maintained the same view, while discussing about Sankara's statement of *maya*. He says :

> 'Sankara, for example, who is commonly but wrongly supposed to be an illusionist, a thinker who denies the reality of the world, lays the utmost stress on the opposition of what is known to the mind that knows. . . . He does not say that the empirical world is in any way dependent for its being on the finite mind. All that he maintains is that ultimately, from the highest point of view, it has no independent existence apart from Brahman.' Elsewhere he has said again : 'Both Sankara and Ramanuja maintain that even illusions[8] are not unreal and merely subjective. They are as subjective as the things of ordinary perception ; the only difference being that they are not common to all, but individual and last only as long as they are experienced.'[9]

Now it may be asked as to how the idea of illusion came into being as a substitute for the word *maya* ? Most probably the idea took shape from the practice of the Western scholars who translated the word *maya* as 'illusion' instead of 'unreality'. In the works of Hegel, Schopenhauer, Bradley, Bosanquet, Sorely, Russell, Edwards, Alexander, Freud, Jung, and a host of other Western savants, it is generally found that the word 'illusion' has been used as a synonym for *maya*. Arthur E. Christy has mentioned that Waldo Emerson prefers to call *maya* as an illusion. He says that 'it is sufficient here to demonstrate that Emerson has taken the term, understood it to be illusion and written of it as such . . . In the Journal of 1866, he wrote : "In the

[4] Cf. Dr S. K. Dey : *Vaishnava Faith and Movement*, pp. 232-234.
[5] Vide *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, pp. 578-587.
[6] Vide *Lectures in India*, p. 185.
[7] Vide *The Vedanta Kesari*, July, 1937, p. 91.
[8] Prof. Hiriyanna has drawn a distinction between an illusion and an error, and he says : 'We shall, in what follows, overlook the distinction between errors of perception and illusions, as the only explicit in the former, it is implicit in the latter.'
[9] Vide the *'Realistic Idealism'* by Dr Haldar, in the *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*, p. 219.

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history of intellect, there is no more important fact than the Hindu theology, . . . as *mayas* or illusions, . . . Truth is against the *maya* which deceives Gods and Men".'[10] Waldo Emerson has written a beautiful poem, known as *Maya*, which runs thus :

> Illusion works impenetrable,
> Weaving webs innumerable,
> Her gay pictures never fail,
> Crowds each other, veil on veil,
> Charmer who will be believed
> By man who thirsts to be deceived.

Truly speaking, it has always been the fancy of majority of the Western scholars to translate the word '*maya*' as 'illusion', and unfortunately we find that the word illusion as a synonym for *maya* has also been repeatedly used even in the works and writings of many Eastern scholars. It seems that they have used the word 'illusion' to mean *maya*, without caring to know the subtle distinction between the words 'unreality' and 'illusion'. We believe that the Western writers and even some of their followers in the East have borrowed the word 'illusion' as a synonym for '*maya*' from the writings of the Buddhist philosophers, specially from those of Nagarjuna and the followers of the Madhyamika or Yogacara school.

Nagarjuna has defined *maya* as a 'mirage' which is absolutely false (*tuccha*) and negligible (*agrahya*)[11] like a castle in the sky,[12] or like a child of a barren woman. Some scholars are of opinion that Gaudapada maintains the theory of illusion like Nagarjuna, and he borrowed most of his philosophical ideas, such as the doctrine of non-origin (*ajatavada*), etc. from Nagarjuna and other nihilistic Buddhist teachers. Some have even gone so far as to declare Gaudapada as a Buddhist, for the reason that many of the ideas contained in his *Karika* are similar to those of Nagarjuna's Madhyamika-vrtti. Dr S. N. Dasgupta strongly holds this view. He has clearly said : 'I believe that there is sufficient evidence in his (Gaudapada's) *Karikas* for thinking that he was possibly himself a Buddhist, and considered that the teachings of the Upanisads tallied with those of Buddha.'[13] Such is the opinion of MM. Vidhusekhar Sastri. Further, Dr Dasgupta is of opinion that the last chapter, *Alatasanti-prakarana* of Gaudapada's *Karika* echoes the idea and spirit of Nagarjuna's *Madhyamika-vrtti*,[14] and as such those who hold that Gaudapada is an advocate of the theory of illusion, cite the parallel *Karikas*, written by Gaudapada and Nagarjuna. As for example,

> *Asato mayaya janma tattvato naiva yujyate*
> *Vandhyaputro na tattvena mayaya vapi jayate*[15]

That is, Gaudapada opines that nothingness or *asat* originates from *maya*, and its existence cannot be proved by anything other than nescience. For instance, a child of a barren woman does not really exist, its idea is born of *maya* or nescience. And Nagarjuna similarly states,

> *Akasam sasa-srnganca vandhyayah putra eva ca.*
> *Asantascabhivyajyante tathabhavena kalpana*[16]

That is, the contention of Nagarjuna is that though the sky-flower and the child of a barren woman are not possible, yet they are conceived as real by the inscrutable power of *maya* or nescience.

But this kind of assumption is not correct, as the meanings of the *Karikas* of Gaudapada and that of Nagarjuna completely differ from each other. The contentions of the *Karikas*

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[10] Vide *The Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, Vol. V, January, 1928.

[11] '*Maya-maricisadrsan agrahya-tucchanalikan*' — Nagarjuna's *Karikas*, B.T.S., p. 38.

[12] '*Yatha maya yatha svapno gandharvanagaram yatha*'—*Ibid.*, p. 55.

[13] Vide *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 423. Cf. also *Indian Idealism*, p. 154.

[14] Cf. Nagarjuna's *Karika*, B.T.S., p. 206, and the *Karika* of Gaudapada, Ch. III, 28.

[15] Vide *Gaudapada-karika*, Ch. III, 28.

[16] Vide *Madhyamika-karika* (B.T.S.), p. 19.

It is needless to mention that the physicists too are inclined to use the term 'illusion' in the sense of unreality or delusion. The eminent physicist like Prof. Eddington has said : 'It (illusion) is not reality but the skeleton of reality'. It is because the mind, the weaver of illusion, ... Illusion is to reality as the smoke to the fire .... Then how can it be deemed good if there is nothing in it but self-deception? .... therefore I assume the second alternative, that there is some kind of truth at the base of illusion'.—Vide *The Nature of the Physical World*, pp. 30-308.

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are that production is impossible if the ultimate reality be non-existent, — if the thing we perceive, be unreal. The unreality cannot come out either from the reality (*sat*), or unreality (*asat*), for the son of a barren woman (*vandhya-putra*) is neither a reality, nor an illusion. So from the contention of the *Karika*, written by Gaudapada it is evident that Gaudapada cannot be called an illusionist like Nagarjuna. Moreover it can also be shown beyond doubt that Gaudapada was not a Buddhist, though he adopted the mode of thought and terminology of the contemporary Buddhist philosophy, to make the subject-matter of his own philosophy more intelligible to the scholars of his time. So it will be wrong, nay incorrect to translate the word '*maya*' as illussion, because illusion has neither an apparent (*vyavaharika*) nor a seeming (*pratitika*) reality, and therefore it will be correct and proper to translate it as 'unreality' or 'delusion' instead of illusion. Again the terms 'unreality' and 'delusion' convey the idea of reality which is not permanent, but appears as real so long as the flash of the permanent Divine Reality does not appear. Therefore the world-appearance is a *maya* or delusion, because it is undergoing changes constantly and thus falls short of its permanent existence. Again the conceptions of 'unreality' and 'delusion' originate from the deceptive or false notion (*mithya-pratyaya*), which is always corrected or sublated by the right knowledge.

Sometimes there is a tendency to compare *maya* with *sunyata* or nothingness as advocated by the Madhyamika school of the Buddhists. But that is not correct, because such tendency arises from the misconception about the real status of *sunyata* or *sunya*. Besides, there are different definitions of *sunyata* or *sunya*, made by different thinkers. Sankara has never taken *sunyata* as pure nihilism, but he maintains that it has an apparent existence, and is contradicted by the valid knowledge.[17]

The Madhyamikas define *sunya* as 'unreality', which is known as '*nihsvabhavah*' i.e. devoid of any characteristic. They are of opinion that as all the appearances (*dharmas*) are relative in nature (*pratityasamutpanna*), and have no real (*paramarthika*) origin, they are, therefore, regarded as devoid of ultimate reality. But this ultimate reality, according to most of the scholars, does not convey the idea of absolute nothingness or void, rather it denotes 'suchness' or '*tathata*'. Ryukan Kimura, Yamakami Sogen, D.T. Suzuki, Prof. T. Stcherbatsky, Prof. Rhys Davids, and many other Western and Eastern scholars believe in this unspeakable positive character of *sunyata* or *sunya*. Some again are disinclined to accept this meaning or definition.

The *Lankavatarasutra* defines *sunyata* or *sunya* as neither existent, nor non-existent, and not even of both the characters. It states : "*Buddhya vivicyamananam svabhavo navadharyate, tasmadanabhilapyaste nihsvabhavasca desitah*"[18] and this statement of the *Lankavatarasutra* echoes somewhat the sentiment of the *anirvacaniya-khyati* of the non-dualistic Vedanta. Nagarjuna divides existence (*sattva*) into two categories, phenomenal (*samvrti*) and transcendental (*paramarthika*). He says that by the application of the theory of *pratityasamutpada*, it can be said that *sunyata* or *sunya* connotes the idea of appearances, devoid of ultimate reality (*svabhava-sunyata*). That is, he means to say that what originates, being depended upon cause and condition, and is grasped by the intellect, is devoid of ultimate reality. Candrakirti is also of opinion that the things which are ultimately unreal (*nihsvabhavah*) are *sunya* or void.

Now, what do we mean by the term '*pratityasamutpada*', as advanced by the Buddhists ? According to the Buddhist philosophy, *pratityasamutpada* is regarded as a nescience or *avidya*, because it is a changing thing and undergoes changes all the time. It changes in the forms of causes and consequences. Buddha himself regarded *avidya* as the cause of all

[17] *Sunyavadipaksastu sarvapramanavipratisiddha iti tannirakaranaya nadaah kryate. Nahyayam sarvapramana-prasiddho lokavyavaharo'nyat tatvamanadhigamya sakyate apahnotum.* Cf. the *Bhasya* on the Aphorism, 2.2.31.

[18] *Lankavatara.*

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sorrows and miseries. It has been said in the *Visuddhimagga* that *avidya* is the causeless primary cause that causes the origin of the world-appearance. Again, according to the *Suttapittaka* and the *Abhidhammapittaka, avidya* has been described as absence of knowledge (*jnanabhava*) that causes sorrows and miseries. The *Majjimanikaya* has also stated about the fourfold *avidya* and they are: (1) *avidya* about sorrow; (2) *avidya* as to how sorrow originates, (3) *avidya* about the nature of the extinction of sorrow, and (4) *avidya* as to how sorrow is destroyed.[19] The *Astasahasrika-prajnaparamita* has defined *avidya* in the term of *skandhas*, and states that the five *skandhas* are nothing but *maya* or *avidya*, because all the *skandhas, rupa, vedana, samjna, samskara* and *vijnana* delude men in the den of their impermanent and unreal existences. Asvaghosa also considers *avidya* to be the cause of all illusory appearance, because it makes the transcendental Absolute to assume a relative aspect. The author of the *Lankavatarasutra* is also of the same opinion. He says that the world-appearance evolves out of *avidya*, and so it has no permanent existence, rather it undergoes changes as an uninterrupted flow. Such also is the view of Nagarjuna, to some extent, for, according to him, the world of appearance is the product of nescience i.e. *samvriti*. The transcendental Truth is above the reign of nescience and therefore, it is neither existent, nor non-existent, neither real nor unreal.

In fact, Nagarjuna was an exponent of the doctrine of absolute nothingness (*sunyavada*) as well as the founder of the *Madhyamika* school. The fundamental doctrine of the *Madhyamika* school, says Prof. Yamakami Sogen, has given the appellation 'nihilism', because Nagarjuna used to term '*sunyata*' or emptiness to express his conception of human life and truth. But the term '*sunyata*' "does not imply nothingness; it simply expresses the everchanging state of the phenomenal world, or absolute unrestrictedness of the noumenal side of the universe".[20] It has already been said that most of the Western and Eastern scholars do not accept the term '*sunyata*' to mean 'nothingness' or 'void'. Ryukan Kimura also supports the view of Prof. Sogen and says: "Many Buddhist scholars are apt to explain the term '*sunyata*' in Mahayana Buddhism as 'emptiness'. But it is quite a wrong explanation, because, the meaning of '*sunyata*' as explained in the *Prajnaparamita* as well as other *Mahayanasutras* may be translated as 'absolute unrestrictedness'.[21] Prof. Kimura also strikes the same note when he says that the real meaning of *sunyata* can be known if we survey the essential idea of the *Prajnaparamitasutra* and other authoritative books of the Mahayana Buddhists. The essential idea of the *Prajnaparamitasutra* can be summed up in the words of '*nirakara-sarva-sunyata*' (all is formless void) or '*sarva-dharmanam sunyata na sa sakyabhilapitum*' (all existence is void and it cannot be explained). This is exactly the idea of the Mahasanghikas. In a sense it can be said that the Mahasanghika doctrine of '*anatma-dharma*' has been elaborately expressed in the *Prajnaparamitasutras* under the term '*sunyata*' or '*sunyapurusa-sunyadharma*'. In the Sravaka doctrines of the Hinayana, we find the idea of *purusa-sunyata*, while in the Buddha vehicle or Mahayana, we get both the teachings of *purusa-sunyata* and *dharma-sunyata*. On the basis of Nagarjuna's statement we come to the finding that the doctrine, which simultaneously dealt with the two-fold *sunyatas*, belonged to Mahayanism, while that which only dealt with one *sunyata*, may be classed as Hinayana. On the other hand, from a statement in the *Paramartha*, we also come to learn that the Mahasanghikas, on their part too, upheld both the doctrines of *anatma-adharma* and *sunyapurusa-sunyadharma*. In the *Prajnaparamitasutra*, the two-fold *sunyata, asamskrta-sunyata* and

[19] Vide *Maya and Avidya in the Buddhist Philosophy* by Prof. Surendranath Bhattacharya, in the 'Prabuddha Bharata', August 1959.

[20] Vide *Systems of Buddhistic Thought* (1912), p. 194.

[21] Vide *A Historical Study of the Terms Hinayana and Mahayana and the Origin of Mahayana Buddhism* (1927), pp. 7-7.

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samskrta-sunyata, have been described, and sometimes *atyanta-sunyata* has also been added to them. The two-fold or three-fold *sunyata* is again explained under eighteen heads, and they are : internal *sunyata,* external *sunyata,* both internal and external *sunyata,* the knowledge on the *sunyata,* the universal existence of *sunyata,* absolute *sunyata,* limitless *sunyata,* ceaseless *sunyata,* svabhava *sunyata,* all doctrinal *sunyata,* characteristic *sunyata,* non-acquisitional *sunyata,* non-existent *sunyata,* existent *sunyata,* both non-existent and existent *sunyata.* Nagarjuna has also explained the idea of *sunyata* as described in the *Prajnaparamitasutra* under two heads, *samvrti-satya* and *paramartha-satya.* According to *samvrti-satya,* all things are existing provisionally, and, according to the doctrine of *paramarthika-satya,* all things are not existing, and it is known as *atyanta-sunyata* or absolute unrestrictedness.

Prof. Sogen is of opinion that the doctrine of *sunyata* can be viewed from two standpoints, *asamskrta* and *samskrta.* The principle of *asamskrta-sunyata* is to be applied to the noumenal world, whereas the *samskrta-sunyata,* to the phenomenal world. Nagarjuna says :

Sarvam ca yujyate tasya sunyata yasya yujyate
Sarvam na yujyate tasya sunyata yasya na yujyate
Ya pratityasamutpada sunyatam tam pracaksmahe
Sa prajnaptirupadaya pratipatsaiva madhyama
Apratitya samutpanno dharmah kascinna vidyate
Yasmattasmadsunyo 'hidharmah kascinna vidyate
Svabhavadyati bhavanam sadbhavamanupasyasi
Ahetupratyayan bhavamstvamevam sati pasyasi
Karyam ca karanam caiva kartaram karanam kriyam
Utpadam ca nirodham ca phalam ca prativadhase
Nivrttamabhidhatavyam nivrtte cittagocare
Anutpannaniruddha hi nirvanamiva dharmata
Atmetyapi prajnapitamanatmetyapi desitah
Buddharnatma na canatma kasciditapi desitam
Sunyatam sarvadrstanam proktanih saranam jinaih
Yesam tu sunyatadrstistanasadhyan vabhasire.[22]

That is, on account of *sunyata,* everything in this world is possible, and without it, nothing is possible. That which has been produced through causes and conditions, is ever-changing. It is a conventional name and may be called as the middle path (*madhyama-pantha*). If the things exist on account of their *svabhava* or self-essence, then the question of causelessness arises. So you annihilate cause, effect, agent, means, action, birth and death of every phenomenal object. The real state of *dharma* is like *nirvana,* which is indescribable, and birthless or deathless. It is beyond the reach of thought or language, because it is absolute. It was taught by Buddha that there is both ego and non-ego ; there is neither *atman* nor *anatman* in the real state of *dharmas.* So, for removing every kind of erroneous ideas or views, the Pratyeka-Buddhas teach *sunyata.* Those, who cling obstinately to this conception, cannot be converted from their error.

Kumarajiva and Aryadeva have also thrown much light upon these aphorisms of the *Madhyamika-vrtti.* They are of opinion that the *dharmas, samkrta* and *asamskrta* are of relative existence, and so the transcendental truth cannot be expressed by these two terms. The transcendental truth can be apperceived or achieved, if we earnestly cultivate our mind and body, and when we shall be able to realise the absolute truth, our misconceptions of 'I' and 'thou', 'this' or 'that', etc. will completely vanish.

The post-Sankara Vedantists also define *sunyata* or *sunya* in different ways. Vimuktatman interprets *sunyata* as non-existent something ; he says : "*Ato yadi bhrantirisyate, asatkhyatireva sa isyatam. Athava asatkhyatiti iyameva bhrantistvayaistavya, asato' khyate*",[23] i.e. if *sunyata* conveys the idea of 'nothingness' or 'void', then it becomes so (i.e. void), but in the sense of nescience or *maya* or *avidya,* the doctrine of *sunyata* or *asat* conveys the same idea, as maintained by the Vedantins. But this is not possible : *'yato' sanmayam necchasi. icchasi cet, astu samana-gatita. na ca sasti, paksadvayabhavat.'* [24]

In the *Khandanakhandakhadya,* the poet-philosopher Sriharsa says that *sunya* or *sunyata*

[22] *Madhyamika vrtti*

[23] Vide *Istasiddhi* (Baroda ed. 1933), p. 118.

[24] *Ibid,* p. 165.

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of the Madhyamika Buddhists conveys the idea of relative existence of the world.[25] Other Vedantins also deny the relative existence of the world, as it is phenomenal and contingent. Therefore what is the fundamental difference between the Madhyamikas and the Vedantins? Sriharsha clarifies it in a commendable manner, when he states that according to the former, " all objects, including consciousness, are unreal in the sense that they are indescribable, while, according to Vedanta, consciousness, which is self-luminous (*sva-prakasa*), is beyond the scope of unreality.[26] Vidyaranya too does not admit *sunyata* or *sunya* as the absolute negation, because he says, in that case there must be someone to witness the negation or nothingness, and that someone must be an existent one or *sat*, being different from the negation. Such is also the contention of Sankara.

Now, *maya* is known by the names, *ajnana, avidya, samvrti,* etc. Swami Abhedananda terms it as 'undifferentiated consciousness', and Swami Vivekananda calls it as the 'statement of fact'. The term 'undifferentiated consciousness' means the consciousness or knowledge which is not differentiated, or not rightly understood and determined. Swami Abhedananda says :

> 'That differentiated consciousness comes when we have no clear understanding or knowledge. For instance, we generally take this earth and the planetary systems as permanent. We do not think for a moment that the earth is going at one time to be destroyed. We think that everything will go just the same for ever. The sun, the moon, the stars and the planetary systems will evolve, and continue their rotations around their orbits for ever. That kind of knowledge, taking the impermanent as permanent, is called ignorance, or *ajnana*, or *avidya*. That is undifferentiated consciousness.' [27]

In fact, the consciousness, when differentiated, manifests as luminous, and leads men to the path of absolute freedom. The right and valid knowledge has always been held to be different from the wrong one, because wrong knowledge deludes men and makes them forgetful of their immortal heritage. The Yoga psychology teaches us to develop the power of discrimination. It teaches us to discriminate the right from the wrong, and the permanent from the impermanent. The *Atman* is the pure consciousness, but ordinary men take the perishable body as the *Atman*. That is a wrong or false knowledge. That is the nescience or ajnana. The non-dualistic Vedanta teaches us to correct this error or false notion by means of the right knowledge. In fact, knowledge is one and the same in both the wrong knowledge and the right knowledge, the attributes only differ in them. This attribute is limiting adjunct, and it limits the unique substance into different parts. The limiting adjunct is the product of nescience, and so the Vedanta teaches to remove it for the realisation of the knowledge as such.

[25] *Madhyamikadi vagvyavaharanam swarupapalapo na sakyate.*

[26] Vide *A Comparative Study of the Buddhistic Sunyata* by Dr Heramba Chatterjee in the 'Prabuddha Bharata', Dec. 1956, p. 496.

[27] Vide *Yoga Psychology* (1959), p. 233.

Avidya (Nescience) or Maya, called also the Undifferentiated, (the perfectly balanced state of the three gunas, where there is no manifested universe), is the power of the Lord. She is without beginning, is made up of the three gunas and is superior to the effects (as their cause). She is to be inferred by one of clear intellect only from the effects She produces. It is She who brings forth this whole universe. She is neither existent nor non-existent nor partaking of both characters; neither same nor different nor both; neither composed of parts nor an indivisible whole nor both. She is most wonderful and cannot be described in words. Maya can be destroyed by the realization of the pure Brahman, the one without a second, just as the mistaken idea of a snake is removed by the discrimination of the rope. She has her gunas as rajas, tamas and sattva, named after their respective functions.

— *Vivekachudamani,* 108-110.

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MISERY IS GOD'S MERCY

SWAMI SIDDHINATHANANDA

The Holy Mother used to say that misery is God's mercy. It sounds paradoxical. Man seeks God's mercy in order to be free from misery. And yet, here is a person of the Holy Mother's eminence with her deep spiritual insight and practical commonsense, saying that misery is God's mercy. What are we to make of it? None lacks this sort of mercy. Why then man seeks God's grace? A little calm and collected thinking has to be done to grasp its import. It cannot but be true. How to recognise it so? There must be some method. What and how? Let us ponder.

There is a famous and unique prayer of a great lady of our land. The Pandavas won the great war. Yudhishthira was crowned king of India. Their friend, philosopher, messenger and guide Sri Krishna saluted Kunti, his father's sister and begged her leave to go back to Dwaraka. Weeping, she sobbed out her prayer :—

'Lord, thou didst save us from the lac-house fire; all the foul play of the wicked enemies failed to harm us because of thy grace. The marvellous weapons of the great heroes did no harm to us. From countless calamities thou hast protected us. Now that we are safe and victorious, if thou forsakest us, well my Lord, I pray for a thousandfold more misery, for, then we will be vouchsafed thy vision which will remove once and for all the cause for this miserable earthly life. If thy presence will be granted only in times of peril, well, we welcome trials and tribulations by the thousands. Heaven, without thee is hell for us; hell, with thee by our side, is veritable paradise. Thy presence is truly emancipating. It removes all misery in toto.'

विपदः सन्तु नः शश्वत् तत्र तत्र जगद्गुरो।
भवतो दर्शनं यत् स्यादपुनर्भवदर्शनम्॥

All limitations and restrictions are painful. Pain and pleasure are relative and sensual. To the reflecting mind even the so-called pleasure is pain. Man runs after an object thinking it pleasurable. There is no rest till it is obtained. At the time of enjoyment, fear of consequence grips the agent, and also a sense of anxiety that it will be presently exhausted gets hold of him. When the enjoyment is over it leaves behind a sour feeling of regret that he had not been discreet in his conduct. No sooner than one wave passes, another takes its place and pushes him on into a fresh vortex. The wheel of misery turns round again. Anticipatory misery, anxiety, regret and fresh push for further chase and the consequent restlessness are the various stages in the pursuance of pleasure. Can this chase after the will o' the wisp be reasonably called pleasant and commendable? So the wise consider all sensation as pain. In Sanskrit the word 'Vedana' means knowledge produced through senses and also pain, for the impressions these messengers bring are mostly of pain.

Now, what is the locus of misery? Is it in the object or in the subject? Both happiness and misery have the same home. Where is that? If it be in the external object, it should always produce the same sensation. But that does not happen. Sweet becomes distasteful when the stomach is full. Sugar is bitter to a man running high fever. A sleeping man is not attracted by sweet smell. Cold water is pleasant in summer; but uncomfortable in winter. So it is clear happiness or misery is not in the external object. Is it then in one's own self? If so, it must be natural. If natural, there cannot and will not be any eagerness to be rid of it. For it cannot be removed and there will be no end to it. But then we all crave for a state free from worry. And such a state is within the ken of our experience also. When man is sound asleep, no headache assails him, no weight of debt

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bothers him. That is a state wherein one is bereft of anxieties and ailments. Thus the state of dis-junction from misery is an experience with us. So, the intermediary adjunct, the mind must be the home of happiness and unhappiness.

Life is a progress of happiness and misery. Two classes of people do not suffer ; those that have their spiritual vision opened and those that have not yet mentally evolved to the human level. Misery outweighs its opposite. Of all the stuff that exudes through the orifices and pores of the human body, the only thing that one may touch without much repugnance or defilement is tears ; all the rest require soap and water to make the hand clean again. That which cometh out conveys the state of affairs within. So, it is only tears that one may expect at best from life ; if one dives deeper, one may get stuck in or drowned in the more deadly and stinking mire of jealousy, pride, hatred and other hordes.

We usually invoke the blessings of Vighneswara at the commencement of any undertaking. The usual prayer of the worshipper is for smooth success. But Vighneswara provides obstacles as well as removes obstacles for the devotee. A life without struggle, a game without opposition, a lake without a ripple, a journey without ups and downs, gives no self-confidence, provides no physical and mental growth and consequently, a smooth success is a grievous failure. So the aspirant has to face and overcome obstacles and opposition. It is the iron chain more than the silver spoon that takes us near to our goal, to our freedom. So, it is misery, privation, poverty, pain, that is man's true teacher and benefactor more than ease, comfort or happiness. All human achievements in physical, mental or spiritual fields have want and limitation as their parents.

Siddhartha surrounded by royal splendour and pleasure was not happy. Wealth and enjoyment were a snare and a mire to him. He was not satisfied with a sense-bound existence. With the resolve not to set his foot again in Kapilavastu until and unless he could solve the riddle of life and death he fared forth. And he became the Enlightened One. He once said that if the tears shed in sorrow since the beginning of the world could be collected together their volume would far exceed the waters of all the seas put together.

Philosophy started as a search to find a remedy for misery. Assailed by physical pain and mental worry, and surrounded by antagonistic forces, the human soul sought a way to overcome them. We have a marvellous summary of the Bhagavata called the Narayaneeya. It was the heartfelt out-pouring of the rheumatism-ridden author, Narayana Bhattatiri at the feet of his chosen Deity at Guruvayur. What about the original itself? Vyasa edited the Vedas, wrote the encyclopaedia of the Mahabharata, founded the system of philosophy based on the Upanishads through his aphorisms called the Vedanta sutras. With all these attainments and achievements, he felt a void in his heart. He explained his sad plight to the peripatetic bard Narada. The celestial minstrel could easily diagnose the malady of Vyasa, for, he himself had once suffered from a similar complaint. Narada prescribed the nectar of the glories of the Lord of Vraja and cured Vyasa of his mental agony. King Parikshit, who was under a curse of death by snake-bite was the principal recipient of the Bhagavata, and thereby he overcame the fear of death and attained immortality. The world's first and foremost poetical saga, the Ramayana of Valmiki had its source in sorrow. The sage was proceeding to the river for his ablutions accompanied by his disciples. As he was enjoying the natural scenery and watching a pair of doves on a tree, an arrow from a hunter struck down dead the male bird. The mate almost died of sorrow. This moving sight of the misery of a winged biped moved the sage into a poetical curse upon the cruel hunter. Thus the Muse of poetry had sorrow for her mother. शोक: श्लोकत्वमागत: ॥ Soka became sloka.

At the sight of the opposing forces, Arjuna was overcome with grief and confusion. He sought to avoid battle and desert his post of duty. He was in a sea of indecision and misery.

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The entrance to the Gita is through the threshold of Arjuna's grief. The Gita gave him relief.

How did Narada attain his exalted position? He once went to the sage Sanatkumara, saluted him and poured out his mind. 'Revered Sir, I learnt many things, heard many things, but all mere words, and nothing but words. Grief does not leave me. I am sad. Please, Master, ferry me across this whirlpool.' सोऽहं भगवः शोचामि, तं मा भगवन् शोकस्य पारं तारयतु ॥ He received spiritual wisdom from Sanatkumara and became a knower of Brahman and a celestial sage. He roams about the three worlds tuning his veena and singing the glories of the Lord, and wiping the tears of those that are grief-stricken for God-vision.

Instances can be easily multiplied. Viewed in this way, one can clearly see that all upward march in all fields, especially in the spiritual realm, has been the result of struggle against some sorrow, pain, separation, sense of void or limitation. 'Life in the world is transient and unhappy' the sages of yore saw clearly. अनित्यमसुखं लोकम् ॥

What is the source of misery? From the moment the Jiva became conscious of its own separateness from the totality of existence, started this misery also. अपूर्णमन्यताव्याधिः कार्पण्यैकनिदानभूः

The matrix of misery is the disease of delusion that one is ignorant, imperfect and limited. द्वितीयाद् वै भयं भवति ॥

Fear arises from the sense of a second. If there are two, one is bound to fear the second; one is limited by the second. All our attempts at happiness are a return to the original oneness. When friends are together, they are happy, in separation they are unhappy. Father and son feel joy when they stay together; separate them, they are miserable. The lover and the beloved forget themselves when they are united; they are disconsolate when separated. The foetus, inside the mother, is a part of herself. As it grows and develops an individual life, the labour for separation starts, and pain for the mother ensues. Once out, the babe starts weeping. When they were one, there was no pain, no weeping. Separation brought in its train pain and tears. When does the mother feel comforted? When she hugs the babe to her bosom, gives it suck, and feels it part and parcel of herself. The pain of separation can be assuaged only through union. It is the protest against separation that manifests itself as the eternal struggle to come together, to unite in love. It is the inner attraction of the soul that appears as attachment, love and devotion. Man mistakenly thinks it to exist outside. That mistaken path is the road to death. The return march is the way to life eternal.

How can one get rid of misery? If the cause of misery be the sense of separateness, at the dissolution of separateness, misery must cease. Absence of the right knowledge of one's inner self is the cause of duality. By ignorance man has forgotten his pristine purity and identified himself with the ephemeral, impure, miserable and inert body. This mistaken notion is the result of the accumulated impurities of mind consequent upon wrong action. Right action purifies the mind. When the mind becomes pure without residue, the chain of birth and death is broken. When the bond is broken misery is overcome. Bliss follows and freedom is experienced. 'Happiness and misery do not affect one who is devoid of body-consciousness.' 'He who has realised the bliss of Brahman fears naught.' This is the supreme spiritual bliss, the innate freedom of the self, the Self shining in its own glory. Therein, who fears whom? Who limits whom? Who oppresses whom?

What is the way to this supreme goal? Paths are many. There are as many paths as there are pilgrims. The need, capacity, competence, position and inclination of each individual vary. Consequently, routes also will differ. Yet there are certain royal roads paved by our fore-runners. A workman is limited by the available implements, in his work. Man has an intellect, a mind, a heart and hands and feet. The intellect seeks to find the Light

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that enlightens it. Through a process of retreat and elimination of the reflected lights, it reaches the source of all light. The turbulent mind, tired of restless wanderings, yearns for the peace that passeth all understanding and arrives at the eternal background, the ever pure Witness. The heart offers herself at the feet of her Lord, and embraces her beloved in her heart of hearts. The restless limbs like hands and feet offer the fruits of their action to the Master and get rid of the burden of responsibility. Nay, they consider themselves as mere instruments in the hands of their Lord. Thus the intellect, mind, heart and limbs reach their prompter and indweller and the fulfilment of their being.

From the above discussion, we have seen that misery is not an end in itself. We have found how it can be made to serve as a means to transcend itself. Nor is happiness our goal. If these two are properly accepted, if we make use of them as a spiritual practice instead of allowing ourselves to be overpowered or maddened by one or the other, pain loses its poignancy, and pleasure, its power of intoxication. Life becomes a smooth pilgrimage. The goal of all struggle is God.

Should we tread this thorny path to reach this serene state? Can we not avoid it? No. When the barque of life is smoothly sailing, one takes no serious thought of the depth of the river or the strength of the storm. When the boat is overturned and the man is about to be drowned, only then does he, with all his heart, call out for rescue. When physical strength fails and the assertiveness of the ego is shattered, the mind in its entirety cries out for divine support. Panchali, the Pandava Queen, was brought to the open court. The vile Dussasana was dragging at her skirt. She cried for help to the elders of the assembly, to the blind monarch and to her lords. All was in vain. She held to her cloth with one hand, and raised the other in supplication to the various gods. When nothing availed she let go her hold, ceased struggling, raised both hands in adoration, surrendered herself heart and soul at the feet of Krishna and prayed for refuge and rescue. And the Lord did come and protect her. The distance between the devotee and the deity is only little when the call is earnest. Krishna heard in Dwaraka the cry of Draupadi from Indraprastha.

Rare are the ladies that have suffered misfortunes so much as the Queen of the Pandavas. She tells her friend Satyabhama that 'Happiness never issues from happiness; only through misery does one reach happiness.' Here is the daughter-in-law of Kunti who prayed to Krishna for misery, giving a recipe for the attainment of well-being in life, which she has found to be efficacious from her own experience. A sister to Panchali in this matter of supreme suffering, Sita also tells the same tale. She says, 'No happiness is got from happiness.' न सुखाल्लभते सुखम् ॥

All kinds of cares and worries and aches assail us in our everyday life; we should learn to detach ourselves from their clutches, stand aside and look them in the face; analyse their anatomy; then half their sting will disappear. If we can accept them as a lesson, a chance and a challenge, as a blessing of God, they will disappear altogether. When we welcome misery as a means to go beyond its grip, to reach the height of bliss, it becomes a spiritual sadhana, a veritable blessing of God. There was a saint who saw in the snake that bit him a messenger from his beloved. The root may be misery, but the fruit is peace eternal. It is then that misery becomes God's mercy. It is this lesson that the Holy Mother, Kunti, Draupadi and Sita taught us viz., only through struggle, pain and tribulation can we reach eternal happiness and peace. Then the scales of our eyes fall off and we see the effulgent Truth. A native poet sang: Money is honey to the poor man, rice is ambrosia to the starving stomach, shade is sweet to the sun-burnt way-farer; verily pain is the root cause of happiness in life.

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BHAGAWAD RAMANUJA AND VISISHTADVAITA VEDANTA

S. SAMPATHKUMAR

Let me attempt to give in this article a bird's eye view of the life and teachings of one of the most illustrious Acharyas of our Holy Bharat.

When the ultimate truth, as understood to have been disclosed by the Vedanta was not the blissful object of realization and attainment but only the subject of debates and disputations all resulting in the final loud pronouncement that the entire thing was an illusion and producing heat without any light, Acharya Ramanuja was born in Bhutapuri (now known as Sriperumbuthur) near Madras, as if to give life to the dry boned Bhuta (ghost) of Vedanta as perceived then and clothe it with an eternally divine form to be loved and sought after not by a few dry intellectuals but one and all without exception possessing the heart to like the good and the mind to think a little in the right manner.

Quite appropriately the Acharya's Avatara took place in Ardra Nakshatra. One of the names of the Divine Mother, the very embodiment of Bhagavan's compassion is Ardra.[1] Lakshmana, Acharya was so named by his parents, denotes his 'being endowed with Lakshmi'.[2] It is also said about the four Vaishnavacharyas as follows :

> Ramanuja, Madhwacharya, Vishnuswami and Nimbarkacharya became the arch-preachers by the grace, goodwill and favour of Sri Lakshmi, Brahma, Rudra and the four sages Sanaka, etc, respectively.[3]

Further it signified his main task of wetting the entire dry as dust state of affairs with cool limpid ambrosia of devotion (*Ārdra*=wet). The well-known incident of his preaching from the top of the temple tower for the benefit of humanity showed that he was the very embodiment of compassion. He was born with the stamp (*Lakshana*=sign) of a perfect Acharya. Hence for him the name Lakshmana was quite proper.

By his devout followers he is believed to be the avatara of Adisesha, whose previous avatara was Lakshmana, the brother of Bhagavan Sri Ramachandra. The Acharya's entire eventful life amply bears this out.

As a young bright boy he studied under a well-known Advaita Sannyasi, Sri Yadava Prakasa, at Kanchipuram. He humbly differed from Sri Yadava Prakasa's interpretation of important Sruti Vakyas. But this was not appreciated and the story goes that Sri Yadava Prakasa determined to do away with this precious (impudent !) boy by drowning him in Ganga. All started on a pilgrimage to Varanasi and on the way Govinda, the cousin of Ramanuja, discovered the scheme, disclosed it to Ramanuja and helped him to escape. Left alone in wilderness, Ramanuja who was going to be the path-shower to all seekers of spiritual path in this wild samsara, could not find out the path out of the dense jungle and that '*Mānishādah*' (Srinivasa) with His Divine consort appeared as a hunter (*nishāda*) before Ramanuja and led him out and disappeared in the outskirts of Kanchi after deliciously enjoying water from his hands. This reminds us of Sri Ramachandra's sipping water only from the hands of Lakshmana on the first night of His banishment from Ayodhya.[4]

He married and as willed by Him renounced the world by taking to Sannyasasrama. Yamu-

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[1] समस्त जननीं वन्दे चैतन्य स्तन्यदायिनीम् ।
श्रेयसीं श्रीनिवासस्य करुणामिवरूपिणीम् ॥

[2] लक्ष्मीसम्पन्नत्व (लक्ष्मणो लक्ष्मीसम्पन्नः)

[3] रामानुजं श्रीः स्वीचक्रे मध्वाचार्यं चतुर्मुखः ।
श्रीविष्णुस्वामिनं रुद्रो निम्बादित्यं चतुःसनाः ॥

[4] जलमेवाददे भोक्तुं लक्ष्मणेनाहृतं स्वयम् ।

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nacharya, the great Vaishnavacharya in Srirangam was Ramanuja's Guru by the never failing wish of both but Ramanuja did not have any personal contact with Yamunacharya. With the graceful care of Mahapurna and other noteworthy disciples of Yamunacharya, Ramanuja was initiated into the mysteries of Srivaishnavism and grew to be a great shadow giving, fruit bestowing Kalpataru, fully justifying what Vali's wife Tara told of Sri Rama:

निवासवृक्षः साधूनामापन्नानां परागतिः ।
आर्तानां संश्रयश्चैव यशश्चैकभाजनम् ॥

Acharya's task was to divinise the mass and in his long and brilliant career he fulfilled this admirably. He systemetized the Visishtadwaitic interpretation of Vedanta. We shall briefly see some of the important points of Visishtadwaita.

Any Acharya's role is that of a mediator and unifier (*Ghataka*) between the Jivas and Paramatma. This characteristic of an Acharya finds its fulness in Ramanuja. He was a *Ghataka* in every respect. He was a deft and calm reconciler of Srutis and Tamil musings of Alwars, apparently opposing Bheda and Abheda Sruti texts, Bhakti and Jnana, etc. and was never an advocate of partition as the means of ending a dispute.

No one can say that a particular philosophy is alone true by personal experience only and none of our Acharyas have said so. For example can it be said that Adwaita alone is true by experience? It is to attempt to demonstrate the impossible like asking one to witness the dance of a barren woman's daughter. If one completely realises that the world is nothing but an illusion how can he be aware of and utilize his illusory wind pipe and mouth and to whom can he talk? It will simply be like one after waking up from a dream in which he was playing with some boys, again descending to the same dream to join hands with the very same boys to continue the play. This is just to show that the entire edifice of every one of our philosophies (Adwaita, Visishtadwaita and Dwaita) is built on the foundation of Sruti Pramana.

According to Visishtadwaita all Sruti texts must be given equal importance. There are what are called Bheda Srutis pointing out in unmistakable terms the distinction between Jiva and Paramatma. e.g.

पृथगात्मानं प्रेरितारं च मत्वा ।
ज्ञाज्ञौ द्वावजावीशनीशौ ।
नित्यो नित्यानां चेतनश्चेतनानाम् ।

द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया समानं वृक्षं परिषस्वजाते ।
तयोरन्यः पिप्पलं स्वाद्वत्ति अनश्नन्यो अभिचाकशीति ॥

There are also what are called Abheda Srutis indicating clearly the identity of the Jivatman and Paramatman e.g.

नेह नानास्ति किञ्चन ।
सदेव सोम्येदमग्र आसीत् ।
सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म ।
ऐतदात्म्यमिदं सर्वम् ।
तत्त्वमसि ।
अहं ब्रह्मास्मि ।
अयमात्मा ब्रह्म । ब्रह्मैव सत्यम् ।

Adwaitins naturally consider the Abheda Vakyas as Maha Vakyas with the consequent labelling of Bheda Srutis as Alpa Vakyas. The Bheda texts are considered by them as teaching for an Adhikari, who is not competent to perceive and digest the whole truth. Texts dealing with creation etc. are considered as dealing with Vyavaharika realities, which term (Vyavaharika reality) in reality means unreality and untruth.

Dwaitins consider Bheda Srutis as Niravakasa Srutis i.e., texts not capable of being interpreted otherwise than denoting Bheda between Jiva and Brahma and Abheda Srutis as Savakasa Srutis i.e. texts susceptible to an interpretation different from the apparent identity-indicating meaning; e.g. *Tattvamasi* means Jivas are like Brahma i.e. having some of the qualities of Brahma. (अग्निर्माणवक : fire-student—student shining like fire.)

Visishtadwaitins on the basis of their foundational doctrine (प्रमाणप्रतितन्त्व) of Sarira

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Sariri Bhava gives equal prominence to all Sruti texts. This Sarira Sariri Bhava simply means that just as the Jivatma is the indweller, supporter and controller of the body, which is the supported, controlled and dependent, Iswara that is Brahman is the soul of the Jiva, the Chetana and the body, the Achetana. Wherefrom is this clue got? The Antaryami Brahmana of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad gives this :

यस्यात्मा शरीरम्, यस्य पृथिवी शरीरम् ।
...य आत्मनि तिष्ठन् ।

This is called Ghataka-Sruti i.e. the reconciling text. Visishtadwaitin has no necessity to get the help of any extraneous theory however logically deductible it may be from one's own way of interpreting the text.

To make it still more intelligible let us examine some slokas in Bhagavadgita, which is a Smriti, and is the quintessence of all Srutis.

1. *Bheda Texts* :

(a) तानहं द्विषतः क्रूरान् संसारेषु नराधमान् ।
क्षिपाम्यजस्रमशुभान् आसुरीष्वेव योनिषु ॥

(b) तेषामहंसमुद्धर्ता मृत्युसंसारसागरात् ।
भवामि नचिरात्पार्थ मय्यावेशितचेतसाम् ॥

Very clearly these set out the difference between the Lord and the Jivas.

2. *Abheda Texts* :

(a) अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभूताशयस्थितः ।
(b) क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि सर्वक्षेत्रेषु भारत ।

These denote identity between Iswara and Jiva.

According to the interpretation of and logic employed by Adwaitins the latter Abheda texts alone deal with absolute truth and former Bheda texts deal with relative truths which are strictly speaking untruths.

Dwaitins interpret *Kshetrajna* in the above text as Paramatma only and say that it does not denote the Jiva.

Visishtadwaitins interpret the texts as they are and reconcile them with the help of *Ghataka* text namely ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः । 'Bhagawan calls Jiva as His own self in क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि because Jiva is His inseparable Amsa.' Similarly take the following :

(1) *Bheda Text* : Arjuna's words :

शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् ।

Sri Krishna's words :

बहूनि मे व्यतीतानि जन्मानि तव चार्जुन ।
तान्यहं वेद सर्वाणि न त्वं वेत्थ परन्तप ॥

(2) *Abheda Text* :

पाण्डवानां धनञ्जयः ।

How to reconcile these? Visishtadwaitin resorts to the *Ghataka* Text :

यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा ।
तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोऽशसम्भवम् ॥

If Bhagavan is identical with Arjuna (पाण्डवानां धनञ्जय) is literally taken in the same sense as वृष्णीनां वासुदेवोस्मि is He confounded to give upadesa to Arjuna, who will according to Advaitic interpretation is His own reflection?

Not only Arjuna as a Jiva the Amsa of God but His vibhuti or splendour is more predominant in Arjuna. Hence He says पाण्डवानां धनञ्जय: Thus the Visishtadwaitin says.

In Visishtadwaita Vedanta Brahman of the Upanishads, Brahma Sutras and Gita is the same as Iswara, the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the universe. He is saguna in the sense that He is the abode of innumerable auspicious inherent (*Svābhāvika*) qualities and nirguna in the sense devoid of any bad qualities and above Prakriti gunas Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas.[5]

[5] ये चैव सात्विका भावाः राजसाः तामसाश्च ये ।
मत्त एवेति तान् विद्धि न त्वहं तेषु ते मयि ॥

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God's auspicious qualities are not born of Prakriti Satwa (*Satvajanya*) but on the other hand by His will the Prākrita Satwa qualities resemble in an infinitely small measure His inherent qualities.[6]

Visishtadwaitins' one of the main charges against Adwaitins is that Adwaitin in enumerating and differentiating saguna and nirguna Brahmans has made his Brahman as Durguna i.e. affected by Avidya however sadasad vilakshna (=neither existent nor non-existent) it may be.

Visishtadwaitins' way of interpreting this is : Guna means qualities, good and/or bad. When Sruti calls Brahman as Satyakama, Satya sankalpa etc., His auspicious qualities are clearly affirmed. So Guna in the word Nirguna can refer only to bad qualities. Ramanuja asks how can Sruti devour its own words or talk inconsistently.

Ramanuja's siddhanta i.e. Visishtadwaita Vedanta says that Brahman i.e. Bhagavan with full meaning to the word Bhaga from which the word Bhagavan is derived (Bhaga means six qualities, Jnana, Bala, Aiswarya, Virya, Sakti and Tejas), permeates and transcends everything, chetana and achetana and is the indwelling as well as the supervising controller of the universe. He is the ultimate eternal, conscious and blissful reality, whom the Jiva who is real should attain after leaving the miserable samsara, which is also real, and enjoy eternal and equal Bliss, which is also enduringly real.

If that Ramanuja, Sri Ramachandra's brother Lakshmana killed the unconquerable Indrajit with the arrow energised by the Mantra :

धर्मात्मा सत्यसन्धश्च रामो दाशरथिर्यदि ।
पौरुषेचाप्रतिद्वन्द्वः शरैनं जहि रावणिम् ॥

Acharya Ramanuja's astra mantra to destroy the demon of atheism is also in a measure the same. Brahman is (a) *Dharmātmā*—full of auspicious qualities with chit and achit as His attributes, modes or Dharmas ; (b) *Satyasandhascha*—the eternal Purusha with eternally true words like

सकृदेव प्रपन्नाय तवास्मीति च याचते ।
अभयं सर्वभूतेभ्यो ददाम्येतन्व्रतं मम ॥
सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥

and which are available to us ; (c) *Rama*—the enchanter of universe and in whom only the bliss in real sense can be had (d) *Dāsarathi*—takes incarnations to live amidst us, to prove His existence and to woo us and (e) *Paurushe cha apratidvandvah*—is Advitiya in the sense there is none above and equal to Him.

If one believes in Him as above and has devotion for Him and/or surrenders to Him, He will clasp him to His Bosom from which embrace there will thereafter be no slipping.

As that Ramanuja, Balarama's brother, Krishna demonstrated with Gopis as

अङ्गनामङ्गनामन्तरे माधवः ।

(i.e. Madhava before and besides each Gopi and also being in the middle on the moonlit banks of Yamuna,) His relationship between Him and Jivas, Bhagawad Ramanuja's Siddhanta's logical conclusion is, that the released Jivas are like sugar crystals imbedded in Him, the pure lustrous sugar candy, which by Its swarupa i.e. Ananda permeates through and covers them (sugar crystals) all over and presents as if all have become an undifferentiated single entity, though there is no annihilation of the Swarupas of the Jivas.

The Lord with the Kaustubha, the Jiva tatwa, dangling in the gold chain of achit (matter) is unique and one without a second. This is the Adwaitam of the Visishta Brahman, who has the chit and achit as His inseparable ornamental attributes.

In conclusion let me humbly submit that an orthodox Adwaitin admits that Moksha according to Visishtadwaitins is a stage a little lower

[6] According to Adwaita, Brahman is Nirguna in the sense that it is devoid of all attributes and is mere consciousness. Saguna Brahman in Adwaita is a myth useful for a person of puny intellect incapable of comprehending the concept of nirguna Brahman.

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than his (Adwaitin's) conception of Moksha, while a sincere Visishtadwaitin agrees that Adwaitin's idea of liberation is Kaivalya which is a little lower than his (Visishtadwaitin's) idea of Moksha i.e. Sayujya with Ever Blissful Brahman with innumerable auspicious qualities. Both say that one may lead to another in course of time and that from any of those states there will never be any return to samsara at all. This assurance is enough for any sincere aspirant to follow his own Acharya's instructions faithfully without having in mind any hatred or prejudice against other Acharya's teachings.

RAMAKRISHNA - VIVEKANANDA INSTITUTIONS IN CENTRAL AND WESTERN INDIA

MOHAN KRISHNA

Maharashtra

In Maharashtra the Ramakrishna Math and Mission have two branches at Bombay and Nagpur. The Bombay branch conducts a students' home, a dispensary, a library over and above the usual worship, classes, lectures, festivals and occasional relief work. The Nagpur branch runs a students' home, a dispensary, a library and publication of Hindi and Marathi books and a Marathi monthly. Other than these there are several institutions in the State run by devotees.

Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Poona : About 25 years ago Sri Vivekananda Society was formed in Poona under the leadership of the late Sardar Mudaliar. The present plot with 3 acres of land was purchased in 1955. The Ashrama is situated among picturesque surroundings in a quiet but congenial atmosphere on the Vithalwadi Road near Parvati Hills. Prayers are conducted every day in the morning and evening preceded by arati. These are well attended by the public. The Ashrama runs a library built up with nearly two thousand books on philosophy and religion donated by the public. A Monk's quarter has also been constructed in the Ashrama where the visiting sadhus from various centres of Ramakrishna Mission are accommodated. Birthday anniversaries of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda are celebrated every year in the Ashrama. Daridra-Narayan Seva is also carried out as a part of the celebration.

Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Buldana : It is a registered body started in 1955 by the inspiration of Swami Bhaskareshwaranandaji of Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Nagpur. The Ashrama has 1½ acres of land, a pucca building comprising of 4 rooms. Another building houses the library. Puja and daily arati are conducted and birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swamiji in the Ashrama as well as in some of the surrounding places are observed.

Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Nasik : In Panchavati Swami Chaitanyananda is running this Ashrama from 1945, the property being donated by Mrs. J. R. Mody. Daily puja, arati, classes and lectures and a small library are its normal activities. Occasionally celebration of birthdays, publishing of books, helping students and medical service are also done in a small scale.

In *Dadar* (Bombay) there is a well-established Ashrama conducting religious and cultural activities. In *Sholapur*, *Satara* and *Amaravati* devotees have formed groups and are trying to start regular Ashramas.

Gujarat

In Gujarat the only branch of the Mission is at Rajkot. It runs a library, a students' home and a department of publication for Gujarati books. Other than this there are two

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more Ashramas at Ahmedabad and Vallabh Vidyanagar. Several other groups also are functioning in different towns of this State.

Sri Ramakrishna Seva Samiti, Ahmedabad : Started in 1923, the Samiti is now running two schools, one in the city (with 625 students) and the other at Maninagar (with 800 students). There is an Ashrama at Maninagar, Ahmedabad with 10,000 sq. yards of land. There is a free library there. The Samiti is doing publication work also and distributes a large number of books free. Occasional free medical help is given also.

Sri Ramakrishna Seva Mandir, Vallabh Vidyanagar, Gujarat : It has been established in the University town near Anand by the efforts of devotees led by Sri Natawarlal Dave. It maintains a shrine, a small dispensary and also conducts regular bhajan, periodical discourses and observes the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swamiji.

Rajasthan

In Rajasthan there is one branch of the Mission at Khetri. The palace where Swami Vivekananda stayed has been taken as a gift and a library and a students' home are being started. Other than this there are two well-organized centres at Ajmer and Bikaner.

Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Ajmer : It was established in 1944 and was registered in 1955. It maintains a charitable dispensary, 2 free libraries and a reading room with a branch in the Ajmer town. Running a small hostel, distribution of milk, occasional help to poor people over and above regular prayer, and birthday celebrations organized in different parts of Rajasthan are some of its activities.

Sri Ramakrishna Kutir, Bikaner : Founded by Swami Japanandaji of the Ramakrishna Mission in October 1949, with the sole object of propagating the ideals of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, the activities of the Kutir began on 12-12-1956, in its new building. The Kutir is functioning through education of children, dissemination of religious literature and discourses to devotees.

Madhya Pradesh

The newly constituted Madhya Pradesh has no branch of the Ramakrishna Mission. But a few well established centres are being run by local devotees.

Ramakrishna Seva Samiti, Raipur : This Ashrama has been started a few years ago by Swami Atmananda with the help of devotees. Along with regular classes, lectures, a library and a small students' home are also run. Recently a big plot of land has been acquired, which is the first step to the realization of an ambitious scheme.

Sri Sri Ramakrishna Sangha, Khamaria, Jabalpur : This was started in 1955 through the efforts of some devotees employed on work in connection with defence services in the Ordnance Factory, Khamaria. There are regular weekly sittings and classes, where puja, arati, bhajan, kirtan and religious discourses are held. A library is maintained with books on philosophy and religion with a special emphasis on the literature on Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. Besides the library, a craft institution for the ladies' handicraft in leather, tailoring and embroidery is run. Last year a diploma course in tailoring and embroidery was inaugurated with assistance of the Usha Tailoring Authorities. There are two medical centres and a nursing service. Usual religious festivals are observed, the biggest being the Kalpataru Day. Thousands of people join this festival every year.

There is also another Ashrama of a similar nature in the city of Jabalpur.

Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Gwalior : This Ashrama was started in 1960 and at present it conducts meditation, bhajan and birthday anniversaries along with a library and a book stall for religious books.

Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Indore : This Ashrama, recently started by Swami Satswarupananda and the local devotees, runs a small school and a hostel and observes the different birthday ceremonies.

In Bhopal also an association is working on the same line.

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THE HOLY LAND

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

(In this poem, *Bharata Tirtha*, Tagore speaks of India as the holy land where pilgrims have come from different parts of the world. He finds an abiding unity of her people in her spiritual power and the realisation of the divinity of man.—*Translator.*)

I

Awake, my mind, in this holy land
On the shore of this mighty sea of men—India.

I stand here and with outstretched arms
Salute the Divinity as man,
And lift my voice in praise of Him.

Here mountains are solemn with meditation,
The plains hold the rosary of rivers,
Here you witness the ever-sacred earth,
On the shore of this mighty sea of men—India.

II

Nobody knows by whose bidding these streams
Of men have flowed irresistibly
To lose their identity in this sea.
Aryan, non-Aryan, Dravidian, Mongoloid,
Scythian, Hun, Pathan, Moghal—
All have merged in one body here.

And today the door of the West is unbarred
And all peoples bring their offerings from there.
They will give and take, meet and call for meeting
And will not go back strangers to this land,
On the shore of this mighty sea of men—India.

III

Those who came fighting and singing of victory
In wild commotion across the deserts and
The mountains—they are all within me.
None—none of them lies far. In my blood
Their presence sounds in its varied tunes.

Strike, strike this tune, my fiery *vinā* !
Even those who are staying away
Will break all bonds and come and stand round the Mother,
On the shore of this mighty sea of men—India.

IV

Once on this land the great Word of prayer [1]
Announced the ONE, striking at men's heart-strings
And ringing in the sky. Through the power
Of the spirit all diversity was
Sacrificed in the fire of the One. All
Differences forgotten, one mighty heart beat.

The door of the sacrificial hall
For that discipline, that meditation
Is wide open. All must meet here with bowed heads,
On the shore of this mighty sea of men—India.

V

Even today in that sacrificial fire
Burns the blood-red flame of suffering.
We have to bear it and burn within our hearts.
That is our destiny. Accept this sorrow,
My mind, listen to the call of the One.

Triumph over all shame and fear, and let
No question of insult arise. The pain
Of sorrow gone, what a great soul will take
Its birth ! The night is at its end, the Mother
Rises in this great home of hers,
On the shore of this mighty sea of men—India.

VI

Come Aryan, non-Aryan, all ! Come Hindu,
Muslim ! Yes, come you English ! Come Christian !
Come you Brahmin with the mind purified
And hold all by the hand. Come Pariah, may
The deadweight of insult fall away from you !
Come quick, one and all, to the Mother's anointment.
The auspicious pitcher is not yet filled
With water sanctified by the touch of all,
On the shore of this mighty sea of men—India.

1910.

(*Translated by* ABINASH CHANDRA BOSE)

[1] Om.

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ON TAGORE'S POETRY

SARASWATHI GOWRISHANKAR

I hunt for the golden stag.
You may smile, my friends, but I pursue the vision that eludes me.
I run across hills and dales, I wander through nameless lands, because I am hunting for the golden stag.

The desire to escape from the artificial restraints of civilised society into the purer air of nature is the common heritage of poets, both ancient, and modern, in all languages. It is Tagore's peculiar genius, however, that when he came to write his own songs, he discarded without the least hesitation the rigid fetters of the classical metrical system, but chose instead the fine rhythmical prose that has been used with such grandeur in works such as The Song of Solomon.

No doubt this poetical form represented a bold break with literary tradition, but this is of no matter, for form is ever subservient to the emotional and musical content of poetry. While still in this mood of experiment, Tagore has written much fine poetry that is simply pastoral in content; scenes of rural life, long slow journeys by boat on the River Padma, village women gossiping at the landing ghats or wandering in the colourful village fairs, the quick changing skies of Bengal—the bright sun-shine and the sudden storm—all these are painted with skill and loving attention to detail.

It is not however the picturesque language of the poems or the novelty of the poetic form or the musical quality of the verses that ultimately holds our attention. Every poet is an artist after all, and must of necessity study nature, if only, for instance, in the Greek classical tradition, in order to embody in his art what appears to him supremely beautiful in the human world. Naturally, such a poet would seek to express only what he considered the Good or the Beautiful in Nature and to deny expression to the opposite. On the other hand, the poet with a purely naturalistic point of view would describe in his work Nature as he saw it, in all its profusion, over-abundance and crudeness. Both Good and Evil as they appeared on the surface would be depicted as two separate facets of this chaotic world.

Tagore's work does not fall into either of these extremes. Steeped in the tradition of the mystic poets of India such as Kabir, his songs echo with an inner music of their own, the music that the true poet hears within himself when he is in tune with the Infinite. It is this same quality of inner music that characterises the work of Wordsworth and Shelley, among the English poets. The mystic poet neither sits in judgment on Nature, arrogating to himself the power to distinguish between Good and Evil, the Beautiful and the Ugly—as in the Greek tradition—nor does he impassively sit back and allow his pen to describe what his finite eyes see all around him —this would merely make him a writer of mediocre verse.

On the contrary, the mystic poet, endowed as he is with a supreme love for God, observes Nature and Life around him with an Inner vision. He looks everywhere for the order behind the chaos, for the harmony beyond the conflict :

The same stream of life that runs through my veins night and day runs through the world and dances in rhythmic measures.
It is the same life that shoots in joy through the dust of the earth in numberless blades of grass and breaks into tumultuous waves of leaves and flowers.
It is the same life that is rocked in the ocean-cradle of birth and of death, in ebb and in flow.

While thus seeking, his poetry takes on an almost meditative quality. There is a phase of observation followed by a mood of indrawn contemplation during which the poet's mind composes itself to receive new truths and new shades of meaning, then proceeding triumphantly to a second phase of observation.

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It is after just such an experience, in a mood of silent worship, that Tagore sings :

> There comes the morning with the golden basket in her right hand bearing the wreath of beauty, silently to crown the earth.
>
> And there comes the evening over the lonely meadows deserted by herds, through trackless paths, carrying cool draughts of peace in her golden pitcher from the western ocean of rest.
>
> But there, where spreads the infinite sky for the soul to take her flight in, reigns the stainless white radiance. There is no day nor night, nor form nor colour, and never, never a word.

Sometimes too, his spirit is caught up in a mood of pure joy and his adoration is expressed in a burst of song such as this :

> Ah, the light dances, my darling, at the centre of my life; the light strikes, my darling, the chords of my love; the sky opens, the wind runs wild, laughter passes over the earth.
>
> Mirth spreads from leaf to leaf, my darling, and gladness without measure. The heaven's river has drowned its banks and the flood of joy is abroad.

At that moment of rapture, the poet *is* one with Nature. His personality as a human being is no longer separate from the other objects of creation. He is absorbed in the Whole and is a part of it, as are the elements, the flowers, the birds and the animals.

At such a moment must Tagore have written the tenderly beautiful poems that speak of the loving relationship between man and beast :

> Yet suddenly in some wordless music the dim memory wakes up and the beast gazes into the man's face with a tender trust and the man looks down into its eyes with amused affection.
>
> It seemed that the two friends meet masked, and vaguely know each other through the disguise.

The lyrical mood has passed; the inner tranquillity remains; and the poet is no longer the Experiencer of change but the Witness. He now becomes conscious of pain, of sorrow, of compassion in the relationship between man and man, and man and nature. He can sing with a gentle pity on the madman who, looking for the touchstone all his life, knew suddenly that somewhere in point of time he had found it and had lost it again :

> Just as the ocean for ever lifts its arms to the sky for the unattainable —
>
> Just as the stars go in circles, yet seeking a goal that can never be reached —
>
> Even so on the lonely shore the madman with dusty tawny locks still roamed in search of the touchstone.

It is at this point that we can read with loving pleasure the many exquisitely beautiful poems of childhood. To the poet, the child who demands nothing from life, seems the one being who has hold of the secret of the Universe, who has knowledge of the significance of things and is therefore essentially the spirit of joy :

> When I bring to you coloured toys, my child, I understand why there is such a play of colours on clouds, on water — and why flowers are painted in tints — when I give coloured toys to you, my child.

There is great delicacy also in the poems that depict human love. The joy that trembles into life when the Lover meets the Beloved and the sweet pain of their separation, both are captured for us in accents of exquisite beauty :

> If today I bring my homage to you, forgive me, my love. The everyday world is hidden in the dimness of the rain, all work has stopped in the village and the meadows are desolate. In your dark eyes the coming of the rain finds its music, and it is at your door that July waits with jasmines for your hair in its blue skirt.

And again :

> She is near to my heart as the meadow-flower to the earth; she is sweet to me as sleep is to tired limbs. My love for her is my life flowing in its fullness, like a river in autumn flood, running with serene abandonment.

When speaking of human love, the Greek poets take up their characters into a separate world as it were, where nothing is of any importance but the sorrowful course of their own love. The lovers seem to stand isolated from all Creation, while the tragedy runs to its

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close and not till the final message—of the pitiful incompleteness of all human relationships—has been sung are they restored to their normal places.

This message Tagore also gives us when he acknowledges that "the gift of gladness that you have for us is never perfect" in lines such as these :

> I know that I must be content in my love, with what is fitful and fugitive. For we have met for a moment in the crossing of the roads. Have I the power to carry you through this crowd of worlds, through this maze of paths? Have I the food that can sustain you across the dark passage gaping with arches of death?

But here we are conscious of one important difference in Tagore's attitude : in all his futile struggle, man is never torn apart from Nature. He is a part of it and remains so, however tragic his external circumstances or his inner emotions may be :

> It is this sorrow of separation that gazes in silence all night from star to star and becomes lyric among rustling leaves in rainy darkness of July.
>
> It is this everspreading pain that deepens into loves and desires, into sufferings and joys in human homes; and this it is that ever melts and flows in songs through my poet's heart.

Not in opposition to nature nor in apathy to nature's moods can man find his true fulfilment. It is for him to realise that Nature is no rude adversary to be set upon and conquered (as the modern scientist would have us imagine when he boasts of the 'Advancement' of Science). Tagore would have us believe rather, that advancement does not lie in the conquest of imagined barriers between Man and his enjoyment of Nature's treasures, but in the breaking down of the barriers in his own mind that separate him from nature and therefore from his ultimate destiny :

> Why did the lamp go out?
> I shaded it with my cloak to save it from the wind, that is why the lamp went out.
> Why did the flower fade?
> I pressed it to my heart with anxious love, that is why the flower faded.
> Why did the stream dry up?
> I put a dam across it to have it for my use, that is why the stream dried up.

When love is no longer demanding, man will find in sweet surrender to Nature the perfect companion to all his moods and a partner in all his joys and sorrows ; then truly all Nature will be his kingdom where he may wander at will.

Every aspect of Nature becomes then a symbol of Beauty :

> Even a blade of grass or an atom of dust brings a message from the unknown. To him every flower is a symbol of worship, every garland a gitanjali, every forest a temple, every hill top god's dwelling place. The sound of the running water, the rustle of the leaves and the song of the bird are so many hymns of praise to the great God.

In utter humility which is the highest worship, the poet too pays his tribute :

> In one salutation to thee, my God, let all my senses spread out and touch this world at thy feet.
>
> Like a rain cloud of July hung low with its burden of unshed showers let all my mind bend down at thy door in one salutation to thee.

TAGORE, THE IMMORTAL BARD

K. B. SITARAMAYYA

Bharat sang through you to the world
Her message of the soul's love for God,
To her own children too she spoke through you
To learn the wisdom of the modern world.
Immortal Bard! Beauty, Love and Joy,
God's own attributes you lived and sang,
And your life itself was a song
And like your songs, a prayer to the Lord.

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MESSAGE OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

SWAMI SATSWARUPANANDA

The world teachers, the path-finders or Incarnations of God as they are called, serve as a bridge between the setting past and the rising future. They bring to culmination the best of the past, purify it of its dross and indicate the trends of the future and its glories. In all matters, physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual, they leave behind enough materials to work on for several centuries. They are creative geniuses, Vishnus, who gently, almost imperceptibly, create new patterns out of the old materials, and thus bring about a new culture and civilization. Their method is evolutionary and not revolutionary.

Sri Ramakrishna is one such world teacher, whose life and teachings have laid the foundation of a new glorious culture for the whole of mankind. In a life of fifty years, he lived the entire past spiritual life of mankind and its future possibilities, broke barriers that had led to constant quarrels and wars, and brought about a happy synthesis of the immense varieties of faiths and sects, keeping them, at the same time independent and still evolving.

He did one thing of very great importance : he broke the opposition of matter and spirit—matter, he says, does not tempt and take us away from spirit but reveals its involved glories. The opposition that held the field for millenniums was born, according to him, not out of the nature of either but from a misreading of their expressions by abnormal personalities risen to greatness. Given a true outlook, they are helpers and playmates to one another, in the *Lila* of the Lord. The importance of this contribution to the rising culture and civilization is fully realized when we understand that it nipped in the bud the quarrel between the primacy of matter and of spirit, which Marxists started. In a series of a, b, a, b *ad infinitum* there is no priority or posteriority : between manifestation and that which manifests there is nothing to choose ; without the one the other is not, even as the sun and its rays.

The salient points in Sri Ramakrishna's message are all important in their own ways, each resolving a human complex which was retarding man's progress. But all of them, according to some, are corollaries of one main proposition : *Nara* is *Nārāyana*, man is divine, or Jiva is Shiva, creatures are Creator in play. If we leave aside all other contributions of Sri Ramakrishna to the inauguration of a new world culture, this alone is sufficient to hail and adore him as a Saviour of mankind. Its implications are, however, to be properly understood.

For the West, it is a saving grace descending on the faithful, inasmuch as the constant dwelling on ' man is a born sinner ' had been serving as a dead load on men still having faith in religion. And the psychological truism ' as you think so you become ' is applicable here too : they actually started thinking themselves sinners. So when Swami Vivekananda, dwelling on ' Hinduism ', addressed them as ' Children of Immortal Bliss ' and said, ' Sinners ? It is a sin to call man a sinner ', almost the entire audience were on their legs, the relief was so great and spontaneous.

On those who lost or were losing faith in God and religion it gave thought to reconsider their attitude ; and the Swami's subsequent lectures on Vedanta supplied the rationale, which convinced them of the truth of the statement and brought them back to the fold of the faithful.

On the scientists, positivists, humanists, who held the field of culture then, it produced a wonderful effect—their brains were satisfied, their heart's craving for service got a wider field of activity, their immortal souls temporarily eclipsed by doubts breathed an air of

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freedom. They understood : man is not mere clay, flesh, blood and bone, whom they are to serve ; inside him there is an organizing force, fashioning out of dead matter living creatures, their beautiful, nay, wonderful, shapes and sizes ; such a force cannot but be conscious and willing.

Then again, the nationalists' barrier is broken. Man is man wherever he is born or stays. Yes, he is surely American, English, German, Russian or Chinese ; but transcending all these, he is man—the same man in flesh with actual frailties and potential excellences, on the way to infinity and perfection ; but inside flesh there is a perfect wisdom individualized and fashioning wonders, whom it is a privilege and an honour to serve and worship.

For the East, mostly in bondage, it was a message of hope and cheer. The conquerors and exploiters had been dinning into their ears that they were non-entities, had no future, that they were mere 'drawers of water and hewers of wood', meant only to serve their masters, in which lay their salvation. These people were led to believe that their past at best was black magic and superstition and that the only light that was coming to them under the Western patronage was all they could expect, was all that was of benefit to them. Thus, cut off from their past and shut out of the future, they presented a picture of utter hopelessness. To bring to them the message of their inherent divinity, that no power on earth can ever deprive them of, of an undying power sleeping in them even in their present state of helplessness, ready to gush out the moment they are conscious of it, is to wake them up to an unprecedented revolution and a glorious future. This declaration to man of his divine nature is not romanticism, so called, but a thorough, practical solution of all the ills, exploited nations are subjected to. It is indeed a panacea.

For India, lying prone at the feet of conquerors for a full thousand years, to hear the sound of her unused trumpet, of her Vedanta, in a new note almost unrecognizable was at first a pleasant surprise and then a thrill of joy giving rise to an all-round resurgence. The tremendous ovation given to her messenger, Swami Vivekananda, was just the beginning to be followed up by activities of hundreds of standard-bearers in all departments of life, leading up to the present period of constructive activities. She did not know that her Vedanta of caves and jungles could be made so dynamic and social as to bring about a veritable revolution in the national outlook. She did not know that her *pariahs*, her untouchable children, reduced by social tyranny to animals, could be made objects of worship, adorable gods.

In a trice India understood her glories and follies of the past, understood her precarious present ; and in the knowledge of her divinity, girded up her loins to get back her birth-right of being a perpetual blessing to humanity, of being a solace and positive help to the oppressed, of standing firm as a rock against tyrants and oppressors. All these, one may say, are not realities but dreams. Yes, dreams they are ; but today's dreams are tomorrow's realities, for those that have woken up to their divine nature. This is the ideal to be realized, is being realized, though extremely slowly.

India understood that the forgetting of this central idea of her religion and culture had been the root-cause of her shame and degradation. She had started looking upon the rest of the world as *mlechhas*, as barbarians and sinners, and upon her own masses as *sudras* and *pariahs* ; and consequently brought upon herself a curse from the Divine of being an object of derision, of being under the heels of those foreigners whom she despised as *mlechhas*. Her own children, the masses, converted by thousands into alien faiths, turned into enemies, whose latest results are the dismemberment of her own limbs, the partition of the country, and sabotages and bomb-outrages within the country by the descendants of these converts. The objects of adoration within and without the country were turned

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into targets of despise. How could nemesis desist from descending on such a people?

Sri Ramakrishna's preaching of the divinity of man and its glorious illustration in his life opened the eyes of the country to the obvious fact. And throughout the country we see today gigantic schemes of rectifying the mistake. Governmental and non-governmental bodies vie with one another in helping these depressed and suppressed sections of humanity. But treating them as mere humans will not yield the same result as Sri Ramakrishna's adoration of Divinity in them. Man must be awakened to his divine nature if the Kingdom of Heaven is to be brought on earth. We find today that the whole country, despite its hundred and one projects of ameliorating the condition of the masses, suffers from a sense of inadequacy, verging on frustration. The infinite power, wisdom, love, and holiness that are lying dormant in each individual cannot be drawn out and utilized by merely serving his body, or even his mind, but by adoringly awakening him up to his immense possibilities, by touching his soul. When the flood-gate of his divinity is opened it will gush out in all channels, blessing him and all. The prophesied Kingdom of Heaven will descend only when Sri Ramakrishna's emphasis on the divinity of man is sincerely believed in and acted upon.

THE INDIAN CHRISTIAN IN A MORAL CONFLICT

SWAMI SHRADDHANANDA

The Indian Christian is bound to face a moral conflict in the issue between his religion and his nationalism if he wants to take both of them seriously. In the days of the British Raj there was no occasion for this conflict because most of the Indian Christians though born and brought up in India, somehow identified themselves with the ruling class and delighted — subconsciously at least — to consider themselves separate from and of course, superior to the 'natives'. They rarely cooperated with the national aspirations of the vast mass of Indian people. This was in a way consistent with their basic concept of nationalism, for India was not their real 'home'. Their real home was in some corner of a distant land where the white rulers came from.

But things have become different after India achieved her political independence. The Indian Christian has been in a certain sense rendered homeless. He can no longer look to the West for his cultural affiliation and has to take India as his motherland. He is now an Indian national, *de facto*. Superficially it might seem that India being a secular State guaranteeing the fundamental rights of equality, education, property, means of livelihood, freedom of worship etc. to all citizens irrespective of their religious faith, the Indian Christian should not find any difficulty in adjusting himself to the new situation. Yes, he has no trouble so far as his personal secular and religious life is concerned. But difficulty arises when he wants to cultivate a national consciousness. Now, national consciousness which is in short a spontaneous feeling of identity with a particular country and her culture is a master sentiment of the civilized human being. Apart from the fulfilments of our individual and family life we do have a passionate longing to attach ourselves to a large group of people — the nation. This longing is a part and parcel of our character, our personality. National consciousness urges us to think and act in terms of the nation, to accept the likes and dislikes, the joys and sufferings of the nation as our own. But the immense body of men and women in India being non-Christians, the Indian Christian naturally finds it hard to identify himself with the ideas, ideals and social patterns of these people who according to the teaching of

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his religious creed, are 'heathens'. Through the centuries of Christian history this particular word 'heathen' has by now gathered an association of intolerance and hatred which has no parallel in any other religion except probably Islam. Christian love as it stands now is exclusively directed to the Christian or to the prospective Christian. The heathen can rarely claim a jot of it. The attitude of exclusiveness and derision toward the heathen has wrongly or rightly become a sacred formula with most Christians, including the Indian Christians. It is therefore plain that if the Indian Christian has to remain faithful to his church doctrines he cannot escape developing this particular attitude of exclusiveness toward the enormous non-Christian majority of his nation. What kind of national consciousness can he hope to grow under this situation? Here comes his moral conflict. A true spirit of nationalism demands that as an Indian he should feel one with all Indians, irrespective of their religious faith. His church dogma forces him to detach himself from the non-Christians—the heathens, the damned.

A workable compromise could of course be made. In fact, most of the Indian Christians are at present leaning towards such a compromise which is to restrict the application of nationalism to those spheres where the Christian way of thinking does not come into any dissension. For example, such national activities as construction of dams, hospitals and factories, family planning, rural and agricultural development, commercial enterprises etc. can well be matters of genuine interest and co-operation to the Christians as they are to Hindus and Muslims. In other words, the Indian Christian can perfectly identify himself with a secular India. His church would not stand against it. By actively contributing towards the fulfilment of the aforesaid national plans an Indian Christian can in a certain sense, prove his love and sacrifice for his motherland. He can even win recognition as a national hero.

It goes without saying that this type of secular nationalism however expedient it might be, lacks the integrity and vigour of a complete unqualified national consciousness the essential characteristic of which is a living sense of unity with the nation — the people. Are not the people thousand times more important than the machines, the factories, the goods? But we have seen that the Indian Christian is at a great disadvantage in cultivating this unqualified national consciousness. Many of the cultural traditions and behaviour patterns of the majority of Indians do not mean anything to him. If he does not shut his eyes to them and learn to cherish a feeling of apathy and disgust towards them his own religious creed has to be ignored which evidently he cannot do if he is a faithful member of his church. So if the Indian Christian is to completely identify with his nation he has to face the inevitable conflict with the orthodox dogmas of his church with regard to the non-Christian.

In India, for good or for bad, religion has played a very important part in all walks of life from ancient times. The national stamp in India has been always predominantly religious. It is difficult for the Hindu to isolate even secular expressions of life from spiritual colouration. Art, architecture, music, literature, education, social and even political institutions have been in this country associated with religion. In short, Indian culture rests in and is thoroughly permeated by spiritual values. This is a hard fact difficult to deny and probably impossible to change, even in modern and future India. All Indian nationals including the Indian Christian has to recognize this. This recognition is of course painful to the Indian Christian if he is too much tied up with his church creed.

But why should not the Indian Christian make a bit of heart-searching with regard to his own attitude to the heathen? He has been too long blind to the dangers of sectarian isolationism. Let him find out the true spirit of Christ's teachings. It is our conviction that in those teachings there is no room for contempt for any man. The essential message of Jesus is identical with the message of India's

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ancient spiritual teachers. If the Indian Christian learns to separate the kernel of church theology from its husk he may well be in a position to cultivate a complete Indian nationalism. He would then find joy in India's past glories and her present multi-coloured fabric of national life. Unity in variety has been always the search of the Indian mind. As an Indian national the Indian Christian also should place this great ideal before his mind. Let him develop a broad outlook towards his fellow citizens who do not belong to his own faith. Let him remember that profound utterance of the Vedas — *Ekam sad vipra bahudha vadanti* — Truth is one, sages describe it in various ways.

No, the Indian Christian need not have any moral conflict. He can well resolve it by rising to a truer perspective of religion and at the same time embracing the living nation as his own flesh and blood with the requisite love, tolerance, patience and understanding.

ALAMBAZAR MATH

And the Inception of the Vow of Service

(*Continued from the previous Issue*)

SWAMI AKHANDANANDA

Mahotsava

On the birth anniversary of the Master, celebrated at the Alambazar Math Ramachandra Dutt, Master Mahashay ('M'), Manomohan Babu and other householder devotees came.

Two or three days before the anniversary celebration at Dakshineswar, Subodhananda and I went to the Ariadaha house of Rai Bahadur Prasanna Kumar Bandyopadhyayh to invite him and to request him to supply flowers. We met him at the very front of his house. Our talk went on there standing. With tears in his eyes he said, 'Ah! how I envy your good luck! He (the Master) came so near my house, but I could not recognise him.'

Just then some local Brahmans, with Nāmābalis on (a wrapping with names of gods printed on it), were coming towards the house. At their sight he flared up and said, 'They deserve to be burnt alive in a slow fire.'

Though we did not go into the details, we understood everything and at once left the place. It was they who had dissuaded him from coming to the Master.

We discussed what kind of Prasadam (consecrated food) would be distributed in the anniversary celebration. Swamis Brahmananda and Yogananda were then at Balaram Babu's place. There the organisers, Priyanath Mukhopadhyaya and others, proposed that for the Daridranarayaṇas there would be a plain Khichuri (pishpash, made of rice and pulse boiled) and for the gentry there would be Bhuni Khichuri (a pishpash with enough ghee and the best ingredients) with five maunds of the best quantity of Mungh pulse and Banktulsi rice (a good quality of rice). We at the Math were sternly opposed to the proposal. Every one had an equal right to the Prasadam of the Master. In the Master's house there was no invidious distinction between high and low, between the aristocrat and the commoner. So we approached Swami Brahmananda for a revision of the arrangement. We were democrats, you see. We could not brook any social inequality.

At Balaram Babu's place we said to Swami Brahmananda, 'Raja,* is it a fact that you

* We thus addressed Swami Brahmananda.

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have given consent to the proposal of arranging two sorts of Prasadam ?'

He said, 'The householder devotees were talking like that. I was no party to it. Every one without distinction will be served Bhuni Khichuri as you propose.'

At the celebration this year (1897) there happened a very funny incident. Many people of Calcutta would attend the anniversary function at Dakshineswar every year. As women of all classes came in groups to the celebration, common people sneered at this celebration saying that it had become an addition to Dwadas Gopal (twelve divinities of the Gaudiya Vaishnava sect). Hearing this Swami Trigunatita and some boy-devotees girt up their loins to check the abuse.

Some steamers of Messrs. Hoare Miller Co. Ltd., plied between 8 a.m. and 10 p.m. to carry passengers from Hatkhola Ghat to Dakshineswar and back. Ramdayal Chakravarty, a householder devotee, was a contractor under the company. He would be in charge of the arrangement.

Trigunatita warned him against issuing tickets to women. Then up to Jorasanko on the Chitpur Road, at intervals, he hung across the street, long strips of red cloth bearing the words 'Women will have no admission to the anniversary celebration at Dakshineswar.' He and his assistants also pasted large placards on the walls at places in the city forbidding women to attend the celebration. After making these arrangements they were sure that women would have no access to Dakshineswar that year. Before the celebration I went from the Math to Dakshineswar to see how they were constructing the pier.

On the anniversary day all of us save one or two came early in the morning to Dakshineswar from the Math. The rooms to the south of the Kali temple were converted into store rooms. To the south of them cooking had begun before it had dawned. As I came I saw Budiā (a sweet) had already been prepared and in the pan Mung pulse was being fried in ghee.

Girish Babu and other householder devotees came by and by. Those of the Kali Kirtan (songs relating to Mother Kali) party of Andul, clad in ochre, painted all over with ashes, matted hair on the head, came to the Nātmandir (pavilion in front of the temple) and were busy tuning their instruments, Tānpurā and Pākhoāj.

In the meantime women were coming on foot in batches. At this Trigunatita ordered his assistants to close the gate. On the other side groups of women came down the steamer and strolled as they liked in the Dakshineswar Kali temple precincts. This nonplussed the workers that were barring out the women. Then at the request of Girish Babu the main gate was flung open and women flooded the temple precincts like water rushing through a breach in the embankment. Many were of opinion that obstruction had swollen to a very great extent the number of women visitors that year.

As I stood near the store some poor men begged me for food. I twice attempted to distribute Budia among them, but twice I failed. They snatched away not only the Budia but also the basket from my hands.

The Sankirtan parties began their songs. All such Sankirtan parties first approached the seat of the Master, surrounded with railings, placed a printed copy of the pieces they would sing before the Master and bowed down. Then they came out and sang for the people.

Of the leaders of the parties Vaishnavacharan was particularly well known to us, for, whenever the Master was at Balaram Babu's place he would be called in. The piece 'Repeat the name of Durga constantly, my tongue, In a peril who but Durga can save you ?' was much liked by the Master. We have so often heard the piece from Vaishnavacharan's lips.

After Kirtan all were taken to Kuthibari (mansion). Heaps of Luchis, large pans of Halua, packets of betel, jugs of serbat, hookahs and lumps of tobacco would be kept there. Everybody was served two Luchis, Halua, serbat, betel and tobacco.

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That year, before a large crowd had gathered, Sri Dharmapala of the Mahabodhi Society, Sri Jadunath Majumdar, Editor of the *Hindu* of Jessore, Mr. N. N. Ghose and others were walking about to see the celebration. When they saw me they suggested that we should cater some spiritual food along with physical food. In reply I said, 'Why, that purpose is surely being served by this Kali Kirtan and Hari Sankirtan.'

Then I went with them to see the sight of people taking Prasadam. Words fail to express my joy in finding all taking the same quality of Prasadam.

While at this Alambazar Math Swamis Brahmananda and Abhedananda once went to Darjeeling. Through the recommendation of Beni Babu of Andul they secured two free beds donated by Raja Gobindalal of Tajhat and stayed for about a month at Lewis Sanatorium. Sri Sarat Chandra Das who had come back from Tibet offered to pay my railway fare and requested me to go to Darjeeling, but I did not consent.

Vision and realisation at Alambazar Math

For six or seven years I had not suffered from any disease worth mentioning. In Rajputana and other places I kept good health all along. At Alambazar Math an attack of malarial fever kept me in bed for a few days. One evening I had a bad headache and Subodhananda painted my forehead with an ointment prepared with a paste of powdered black pepper. The irritation caused kept the headache in check for sometime. Then the whole night long I revolved an idea in my mind. The conclusion arrived at is a memorable thing in my life and so I note it down here. What a marvel, for the whole night I totally forgot I had any suffering!

That night the point of cogitation was this: the five modes of approach (Bhāvas) serene (Sānta), servant-like (Dāsya), friendly (Sakhya), affectionate (Vātsalya) and amorous (Madhūra)—they are nothing but an attempt on the part of the Jiva (living being) to enjoy all the fun of life ('drink cups of milk') by assuming a relationship with God with the help of the Bhāva (attitude) that comes easy to his nature. A Jiva bound by Māyā (nescience) is never called a Bhakta (devotee). These attitudes are nothing but Māyā in a chastened form.

Then I thought the Atman beyond the bodies, gross, subtle and causal—that Atman was I, that is 'Soham' (I am That). There cannot be a grander conclusion. May that be the *summum bonum* of my life.

Thus absorbed in deep thinking scarcely had I closed my eyes at day-break when there appeared before me a living Nārugopāl (the infant Krishna with a palm stretched for a sweet)—like a big sapphire shaped in a turning lathe. What a perfectly shaped flawless beautiful figure! The effulgence from the divine body of Gopal illuminated the whole room. A smile was radiant on the beautiful lips. Within me Mother Yasoda (mother of Krishna)—dressed in beautiful clothes and ornaments like the ladies of Braja, held out food to Gopal and called Him saying, 'Come, my darling Gopal, my gem, my only stay in life'—exactly as I had heard the Master speak to Rāmlālā adding verses to the main song (Ākhara). As Gopal, on all fours, advanced towards her, the Mother's tone was full of joy, but as He receded her voice became plaintive. While the Mother Yasoda and the sapphire-coloured Gopal were thus at play there stood the Master with the end of his usual red-bordered Dhoti on the shoulder, pointing, with the forefinger of the right hand, once at Mother Yasoda and next at Gopal and telling me, 'Look there, what a sublime thing!' Overpowered simultaneously with wonder and joy I spoke out, 'I care not for Nirvana (absolute merging of the individual self with the Supreme Self), my lord. Oh, what a joy! I would fain have hundreds of births with this attitude in me.' So saying as I was going to clasp in my arms the Master, Gopal and Mother Yasoda I came back to the waking state.

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The day had advanced. The night was over and with it my bliss too. I got up and saw that Ramakrishnananda, with the blunt edge of a knife, was softening an end of a stick to be used by the Master as a tooth brush. I told him, in detail, of my vision. He was glad to hear it.

Another day. Many lay asleep in the outer room of the Math. I was one of them. But it was too sultry for one to sleep. Others slept with sweat damping the bed sheet. I left the bed and with joy waved a large fan over the bodies of others. The sweat on the body of almost all dried up. They moved to an easy posture and slept peacefully. What a marvel, after about half an hour's fanning my body too cooled down.

Then this idea gave me infinite joy, that the power to feel joy and sorrow with others had grown in me to a considerable extent. My heart became full as I hoped to gain my wished-for object.

A haunted house

At Alambazar Math there were Swamis Ramakrishnananda, Sivananda, Adbhutananda, Turiyananda, Satchidananda and a few others. And whoever else would come, would stay. Mahim (Swamiji's younger brother) often came to the Math.

One day at sunset Swami Turiyananda and Mahim were to go out for a walk. Scarcely had they crossed the threshold of the outer gate when Turiyananda came back into the Math very anxiously. Mahim stood somewhat astonished. As the former came out again Mahim learnt on enquiry that somebody had got in. Swami Turiyananda further said to Mahim, 'Did you not notice that somebody got in? I made a thorough search but he is nowhere to be found. People are right in saying that it is a haunted house.'

Another day a funny incident happened. I was not then in this part of the country. As I have heard, Swamis Yogananda, Premananda, Saradananda and others came that day from Baghbazar and passed the night at the Math. Probably there were five of them in the western room inside. In the bigger room in the outer part there were Swamis Saradananda and Sadananda (Swamiji's first Sanyasi disciple). At dead of night a rumbling sound on the roof was heard. On hearing that they in their bed said, 'Oh, the spirits are playing with a ball. Oh brother, Oh Ramakrishnananda, is it for showing us a game with balls that you brought us here?' Premananda said, 'Oh brother, Oh Jogen.' and so on. Swami Ramakrishnananda then in great excitement took a stout club and with a roar hastened to the roof saying, 'Here I am going to send the ghost to perdition.' On the roof he saw a pair of big dumbbells and a burning hurricane lantern. He then shouted, 'How is this? Does a spirit play with balls by the light of a hurricane lantern?' So saying he came to the room of Saradananda in the outer part of the house and detected them who were responsible for making the sound. Premananda, Sivananda, Turiyananda and others were ashamed as they had taken fright for nothing. And as the mischief done by Sadananda and Saradananda was detected, all were in a fit of laughter.

When I came to the Math I found that Adbhutananda, for fear of ghost, kept a burning lantern all night in his room.

Daksha Rishi — Jnanananda

While I was at the Math many called Swami Jnanananda as Daksha Rishi. He was a member of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. Often did he come to the Master. As he was very good-natured Swamiji loved him and at Baranagar Math invested him with Sanyasa. Of course I was then in Tibet and the Himalayas. It was in about 1891 that I first met him at Meerut.

After a tour of the Uttarakhanda (northern part, the Himalayan region) with Swamis Abhedananda and Nirmalananda, Jnanananda passed on to the Punjab. There, with Dayal-

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dasji, Udasi Mandaleswar (chief of a sect of Sanyasis), and Kriparamji, he read *Vrittiprabhakar* and *Vicharsagar* of Sadhu Nischaldasji and developed a capacity for logical discussion of Vedanta. From the Punjabi Avadhuts (a sect of Sanyasis) Jnanananda wrote down the processes of making oxides of mercury and mercuric sulphide and also the art of alchemy or making gold and silver from base metals. He noted them down in a big book. After his coming to the Math Swami Premananda burnt away this favourite note book of his.

At Meerut I found him perfectly sane. From Meerut, I, with Swami Advaitananda went to Hardwar to join the Kumbha (a periodical congregation of Sanyasis). Three or four months after this Jnanananda came to Vrindavan stark mad. I was then at Vrindavan. . . .

After Swamiji came back from America he took Daksha to Darjeeling. On the way Daksha gave him a lot of trouble with his wild pranks. After his return from America Swamiji was mortified to find him in such a lamentable condition. He tried hard to cure him, but to no effect. . . .

He never forgot how I had served him in his mad state at Vrindavan in spite of the troubles he gave me. For, shelterless he wandered about in his mad state, but when I was at Calcutta he would come to me wherever I was. . . . .

He had so much love for me that he came to Sargachi and stayed with me at the Asram for a month. One day a snake-charmer caught a terrible cobra in the Asram and showed it to us. The snake raised its hood and hissed terribly. Every one took fright. Jnanananda came suddenly from somewhere and waved his hand in a curious fashion before the hood of the snake and kept on saying, 'Hallo, how do you do? How do you do?' I pushed him aside.

It is a pity that, as I heard, this Jnanananda was at last found dead on a foot-path in Calcutta.

Indian Museum

While at Balaram Babu's place, for a few days I paid daily visits to the Indian Museum to see the collections of lava, fossils, etc. Next I came to the Asiatic Society Library in Park Street to see the portraits of Sir William Jones, the savant, archaeologist, Judge of the Supreme Court and founder of the Asiatic Society and H. H. Wilson, James Princeps, Goldstucker Cowell, Sir Alexander Cunningham and other geniuses. I found satisfaction in seeing the portraits of the savants in that library.

From Sri Meghanad Bhattacharya, Professor, Jaipur Maharaj College, I had heard of the genius of Dr Ashutosh Mukherjee, a Vakil of the High Court, and of his wonderful personal library, a thing of great attraction for the learned. Since then I had a keen desire to see him.

One day as I was gazing at the objects in the Asiatic Society Library there came into the office a gentleman in choga and chapkan made with black alpaca. As he came in, all the officers stood up in his honour. He wanted a book on Conic Sections and an officer got it down from the shelf.

In the meantime I learnt from the officers that this gentleman was Ashutosh Mukherjee, the renowned Vakil of the High Court. When after taking the book he was leaving, I came forward and introduced myself to him. 'I have heard much of your merits, now I am so glad to meet you,' said I. 'Are you one of the Vivekananda Math,' asked he. 'Yes, I belong to that Math,' said I. At last in the course of conversation I said, 'You are a gifted savant, how is it that you have engaged yourself in the profession of an ordinary lawyer of the High Court instead of dedicating yourself to the service of the country?' On hearing this he was grieved and said in an agitated mood, 'There can be no prosperity for this country within a hundred years. As there is a probability of my being appointed a judge of the High Court, a great leader

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slanders me every week in his paper. Do you think such a country can ever prosper?' This was my meeting with him in the year 1896.

I then often came to see the Art Gallery of the time of Havell. The more I saw the oil-paintings, large and small, representing many places and many aspects of nature the more my hunger to see them grew. Likenesses of the gorges, rivers, forests of pine and cedar on the Himalayas so charmed me that I imagined I had been transported there once again. The Art Gallery contained many a portrait representing many of the grand and lovely natural scenes that had met my eyes in my travel on the Himalayas. A look at the scenes of the hills of perpetual snow helped me to imagine that I had been transported to those places — for a moment I felt a shivering in the body. On some days Priyanath Sinha (*alias* Gurudas Barman, writer of *A Life of Sri Ramakrishna*) would be with me.

(*To be continued*)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

Swami Prajnanananda of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, Calcutta is a noted scholar on music and philosophy.

Swami Siddhinathananda is a monk of the Ramakrishna Order.

The article of Sri S. Sampath Kumar, B.Sc., B.L., Advocate, is the gist of his speech in the Ramakrishna Math, Madras on the last birthday of the Acharya.

Sri Mohan Krishna is from Madras.

Dr Abinash Chandra Bose is from New Delhi.

Srimati Saraswati Gaurishankar is from Calcutta.

Sri K. B. Sitaramayya is a Lecturer in the Annamalai University.

The article of Swami Satswarupananda, former Editor of the *Prabuddha Bharata*, is the text of his speech broadcast by the All India Radio, Hyderabad, during the last birthday of Sri Ramakrishna. We are thankful to the Station director for kindly permitting us to reproduce it.

Swami Shraddhananda, formerly Editor, *Udbodhan*, is now at the San Francisco Vedanta Society. His remarks here are applicable not only to Christians but to Muslims too.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

In recent days much stress is being put on extra-curricular activities in educational institutions, so much so that much of the time, it is said, is spent in them and very little of it is left for serious studies. Over and above the regular N.C.C., social service, sports, excursions, etc. students are encouraged to have the various performances of dramatics, inter-university festivals including music, dance and drama. Add to this the time-consuming welcomes and farewells in the beginning and end of the year. It is true some of these activities are only twice or thrice a week. But though only for a few hours a day, these activities often require a prolonged relaxation or lessen the attentive pursuit of regular studies. If they were limited to a few of those actually participating in them, it would not be so devastating, but others too are carried away by excitement or allurement because of exaggerated importance given to them.

The purpose of these extra-curricular activities is of course good, specially for school-going children. They help students to develop valuable attitudes and qualities. The Secondary Education Commission has stressed in its

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report the place and importance of extra- or rather co-curricular activities. Creative talents and social aptitudes get a fillip and hence they are considered essential for preparation for citizenship. These and the regular citizenship training prevalent in schools help a boy to become a useful member of the society, for they develop in him a sense of responsibility and give him practice in self-direction. Co-operation and sense of discipline also increase. As formalized training may become tasks, robbing them of their attractiveness and crushing student interest, spontaneity and leadership, both compulsory and voluntary training, i.e. citizenship training and extra-curricular activities are felt to be necessary. They in reality are complementary, for both contribute to the development of good habits, thus supplementing the theoretical knowledge. So far so, they are good. True, education to be complete must be both vocational and cultural. But doubt arises, whether we are not giving too much importance to them in colleges too. Higher education is more for specialization, though not losing sight of social and other considerations. It is meant for serious students and so there is very little necessity or justification for introducing these activities, as in the case of schools, to make educational institutions more attractive. It is moreover doubtful whether proper integration of too many extra-curricular activities is at all possible with serious learning.

The extra-curricular activities have another aspect to consider, though of a completely different nature. A college teacher in charge of organizing the college social service, regretted that his best students in service are not so in studies and it is true the other way too. Of course, this may not be a fundamental problem, but often of negligence of studies by an academically average boy. It becomes a real moral problem for a conscientious teacher whether he should encourage his boys to take part in them, for the students who take active part in the activities often are not able to do well in their studies. They may be fine boys, enthusiastic, energetic and even idealistic. But in the immediate attraction of the programme, they jump into it, without which of course the programme would be a failure. The net result is, at the end of the year they find themselves in deep waters. If the extra-curricular activities are felt to be essential for the building up of a true citizen, then it should be given some credit. How to give it may pose a problem. It is better that the credit-giving system is open and follows a definite pattern and not left to fads and fancies of individuals. In this way, we think, some compensation may be provided. In doing so, more credit should go to the service programmes than to the entertaining ones, for the latter have natural attraction and require no inducement. This may be a part of the solution. But when specialization is necessary in higher education, it is better to lessen the stress on other distracting things unless there is an integrated pattern of education. So we feel that for higher education, extra-curricular activities may be lessened or done in vacations and as for them in lower college classes, if such activities are essential, they should be integrated and given regular credit for attendance and proficiency.

The end of all education, all training, should be man-making. The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow. The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful, is called education. What our country now wants are muscles of iron and nerves of steel, gigantic wills which nothing can resist, which can penetrate into the mysteries of the universe and will accomplish their purpose in any fashion, even if it meant going down to the bottom of the ocean meeting death face to face. It is man-making theories that we want. It is man-making education all round that we want.

— SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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REVIEWS AND NOTICES

A HISTORY OF THE DVAITA SCHOOL OF VEDANTA AND ITS LITERATURE*

(Pub. Booksellers Publishing Co., Bombay-4).

A REPLY

The review of my book "History of Dvaita School of Vedanta and Its Literature" (Vol. I) published in the April number of the *Vedanta Kesari* raises some points which call for a reply from me, to clear my position. The criticism about the plan of exposition adopted in Part I overlooks the fact that it seeks to show the evolution of Dvaita thought from its source-books of the Vedic and Post-Vedic literature from a historical standpoint, so far as it may be possible or permissible to apply it to the study of the subject. This is not certainly what Madhva himself contends about his thought or how he derives it from his source-books. The traditional and the historical methods are different in their approach and presuppositions; and at least to this extent there cannot be any actual repetition of thought-process or interpretation of facts between the two methods. I wonder how the reviewer would have reacted to my treatment, if I had begun the history of the Dvaita school abruptly, with the works of Madhva himself without a historical or a philosophical background of the earlier thought on which the system is based or the impact of forces from other systems which necessitated a reorientation of thought.

Whatever the necessity for giving a compact and synoptic account of Madhva's chief doctrines in the Volume, the need for it has been met in my recent work: Sri Madhva's Teachings in His Own Words, (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1961).

The reviewer sees an inconsistency between my citing with approval Das Gupta's admiring critical estimate of the superiority of the dialectic thinkers of the Dvaita school to those of the Ramanuja school and my finding fault with him for certain inadequacies in the treatment of Madhva's doctrines and certain errors and misstatements in his account of Dvaita *literature*. I suppose we can accept that Das Gupta's competence in Indian philosophy entitles him to give an authoritative opinion on the dialectical merits of the thinkers of the three schools of Vedanta. The inadequacy of his treatment of Madhva's thought could very well be due to the limited range and interest of his inquiry into the subject. His errors of facts and interpretations in regard to Dvaita *literature* can also be indisputable facts arising from lack of first hand information regarding some of the authors, or want of verification and scrutiny of details in each case. Surely one does not forfeit one's right to cite a recognised scholar in a particular field, because that scholar has gone wrong in some places. A tribute to the thinkers of the Dvaita school coming from a scholar of Das Gupta's standing is certainly entitled to respect, particularly as coming from a non-partisan and one who does not owe any denominational or sentimental allegiance to any one of the three systems of Vedanta in question.

I accept the reviewer's compliment that I have done a solid piece of defensive service to Dvaita by my reply to Ghate's strictures on Madhva's Sutra-Bhashya. I am quite conscious that mine is but a fragmentary vindication and that a fuller one is needed and I have clearly stated in the Preface that I do intend to take up such a work, in due course. But I fail to see on what ground the reviewer brushes aside the Prakrityadhikarana, Tadananyatvadhikarana, Ikshatyadhikarana, Karanatvadhikarana and Amsadhikarana which I have discussed, as not so crucial or 'crucial because easy.' By all accounts, these adhikaranas are hard nuts to crack!

My work is a *history* of the Dvaita *school and its literature* in the first place and not a treatise on Dvaita philosophy as such. Hence, an account of the Mutts which are the institutions thro' whose activities and thro' the activities of whose Pontiffs the literature and philosophy of the Dvaita school have developed, can hardly be considered out of place in a 'History of the school"! It would be gross ingratitude on the part of any historian of the Madhva school and its literature to ignore the memorable part the Mutts have played in the development of Madhva thought. Das Gupta himself has found it necessary to include a succession list of Madhva Gurus in his work; tho' it does not include many of the authors like Vyasaraja and Vadiraja and Vijayindra whom he has mentioned as great authors of the school. A descriptive account of Dvaita literature without a full account of the

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origin of the different Mutts and the Succession lists of their Pontiffs would be impossible and would only cause confusion.

I have clearly said that Madhva's was a creative genius and that he had so much to do that he did not have time to look to finish of form and exhaustiveness of treatment. On p. 302, I have drawn attention to 'the boldness and originality and distinctiveness of most of the metaphysical concepts and categories of Madhva's system' and that 'their definition and organisation into a system prove him to be a philosopher of outstanding merit' and that it was naturally difficult for one in his position preoccupied with so many aspects of system-building to give whole-time attention to elaboration of form and details. The reviewer has passed over these statements and tries to find 'depreciation' of Madhva by twisting the words or reading his own sense into them and ignoring the force of qualifying words and phrases such as 'appears to be insufficiently co-ordinated' 'seems scrapy and sketchy,' 'seemingly irrelevant quotations' etc. (p. 303). This is not fair. Madhva is a philosopher and there is no harm if his *Mbh.—T. N.* is not accepted as a first-rate Kavya in the accepted sense of the term. It is not for the reviewer to tell me how Madhva should be respected. My respect for Madhva is made of deeper and sterner stuff.

Regarding the different conceptions of Brahman's relation to the finite reals (Prakriti and Jivas) held by Ramanuja and Madhva, my criticism of Ramanuja's position is what can properly be urged from the point of view of Madhva's Theism. To quote Dr Radhakrishnan's remarks in his 'General Estimate' of Ramanuja's Theism, on this point 'the infinitude of Brahman is compromised by the unconditioned infinitude of its constituent factors.' 'If the attributes form the essential nature of God, then the process of change in them must also affect his nature. Does all this mean that God is not absolute actuality, but is himself in the making? The distinction finally, that the soul of God is the efficient cause and his body the material cause is untenable. We cannot take half a fowl for cooking and leave the other to lay eggs.' 'Unless Ramanuja is willing to explain away the immediate perfection of the Absolute and substitute for it a perpetually changing process, a sort of progressing perfection, he cannot give us any satisfactory explanation of the soul of the Absolute to its body,' it may be seen that it would be difficult to regard the Prakriti and Jivas as factors 'integral to the total fact of divine life' or 'as constitutive of God's glory.' It is precisely this way of putting things that Madhva is unable to approve of as God's glory must be infinitely more than what is merely constituted by the finites. The infinite exists and must exist in its own glory *(Sa bhagavah kasmin pratistha iti sve mahimniti)*. The finite may be pointers (jnapaka) of Divine glory; but they cannot be 'constitutive of the total fact of divine life.' As the Absolute is neither a growing one nor one in the making, there is no point in making the finites 'constitute' the 'total fact of divine life.' Ramanuja himself in his *Gitabhashya* (ix, 4) rejects the idea that the finite reals do in any way 'contribute' to the glory or the existence of God: *Aham tu na tadayatta sthitihi Matsthitau tairnakaschidupakara ityarthaha.* Vedanta Desika himself conceives the relation of the finites after the manner of Madhva when he says that their very existence and functioning are dependent on Brahman *(Tat sadbhavapravrityosca svadhinatvavyavasthitehe)*. The reviewer forgets that to Madhva also transcendance of God does not exclude his immanence in the souls and Prakriti. How then, can his Theism become a Deism? The reviewer has not also answered the point if in a Theism one can speak of the finite Prakriti and Jivas also as constituting the total fact of divine life and integral aspects of it, in the same sense in which it may be open to us to regard 'satyam, jnanam and ananda' as constitutive of the essence of Brahman? If not it means that the finites are not 'constitutive of the *total* fact of divine life.'

On the problem of the Srutitva of the Karikas of the Agama Prakarana of Gaudapada, the reviewer is evidently not fully conversant with the views of the Visistadvaita. In his Sribhashya, Ramanuja has cited the text 'Anadimayaya supto....' in two places: one at the Purvapaksha stage and again at the Mahasiddhanta level. In the Purvapaksha also the other passages cited in support of Avidya are from authoritative Srutis and Smrtis. The commentator Sudarsana Suri does not identify the text as Gaudapada's in the first instance. In the Siddhanta context also he merely shows that the construction put upon it by the Purvapakshin that it lends support to Brahmajnanavada is untenable as it only supports the view of Ramanuja and the Theist that it is the Jiva (and not Brahman) that is bound by beginningless Maya. What the commentator and Ramanuja himself have done is to turn the text against the Pruvapakshin himself. This does not mean that they admit that the text cited by the

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Purvapakshin is taken from a work of the Advaita school itself written by an Advaitin. That Ramanuja himself did not subscribe to the theory of the verse belonging to Gaudapada is clear from his citing it along with a well known Sruti text of the *Svetasvatara* and introducing them both with the expression 'Sruyate': *Jivasyaiva hi mayaya nirodhanasruyate Tasmimscanyo mayaya sanniruddhana iti Anadimayaya ..... iti ca.* It is obvious that the reviewer's study of Visistadvaita literature is not deep or comprehensive enough to make him know that within the Visistadvaita Sampradaya itself the great Kuranarayana who has commented on the Mandukya Up. has, like Madhva, accepted the slokas 'mixed up' with the Upanishad as Srutis forming part of the Mandukya itself, and has commented upon them as such. And tradition has it that both Sudarsana and Kuranarayana belonged to the same family. Another celebrated Visistadvaitan Mahacarya (16th cen.) in his *Advaitavidyavijaya* has (as I have shown in my paper on the Upanishadic theory of the G. K., Review of Phil. and Rel., Poona, vol. ii, No. 1, 1931) also accepted the same view. If the reviewer thinks he is a better student of Visistadvaita textual traditions than these recognized authorities of the system, he is sadly mistaken.

B. N. K. SHARMA.

PANCHATANTRA & HITOPADESA STORIES: Translation and Introduction by A. S. P. Ayyar, I.C.S. (Published by M/s. V. Ramaswamy Sastrulu & Sons. 292, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Road, Madras-1). Pages 416. Price Rs. 6.

One of the grand objectives of a kavya is to reform society and the object of a Purana is to instruct the ignorant in a friendly manner. These two aspects have been combined in the Panchatantra and Hitopadesa stories which 'show the strength of the Panchatantra, its delicate humour, its forcible caricature, its profound knowledge of human name, its mastery of worldly wisdom, its unscrupulous but successful theory of politics, its masterly deliniation of the strength and weakness of kings and priests, Brahmins and Jains and Buddhists, its correct assessment of wealth and poverty, its high conceptions of kingship, justice, hospitality and travel'. Both the author and the book under review need no introduction. The author has nobly completed a laudable task, which demands so much of patience and strain. Editing the stories themselves after separating relevance from the ever so many interpolations, is a painful task. But the author has gone farther to provide for us the polity, and civilisation of the people of those ages, as evidenced from these stories. His survey of kings, priests, caste, creed, war etc. is masterly. Moderately priced, no doubt, the book is bound to be popular both in the East and the West.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

THE TASK BEFORE INDIAN STUDENTS: By M. K. Gandhi. Compiled by R. K. Prabhu. Navajivan Publications. Pages 78. Price 75 nP.

This book which is a compilation of Gandhiji's opinions, deals with the students of India. A very interesting book for the modern student-population who can find in this publication what they are and what is expected of them.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

STRAY GLIMPSES OF BAPU: By Kaka Kalelkar. Navajivan Publications, Ahmedabad-14. Pages 166. Price Rs. 2.

Herein we find 103 anecdotes in the life of Mahatma Gandhi which reveal Gandhiji's qualities of self-reliance, discipline, compassion and kindness towards his enemies, trust in God, detachment from objects of extreme desire. Such narrations bring before us Bapuji alive with his characteristic qualities and noble ideals. To Navajivan our gratitude goes for enabling us to draw inspiration of high ideals through these lively anecdotes of the Father of the Nation.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

SANSKRIT-KANNADA

ANUSATYABODHA VIJAYA & ANUSATYABODHA-KATHA-KALPATARU: Ed. by Prof. K. T. Pandurangi. Published by P. S. Ritti, Savanur, Mysore. Pages 54. Price Re. 1.00.

Devotees of Swami Satya Bodha will welcome this neat little digest of the larger Sanskrit works, *Satyabodha Vijaya* and *Guru Katha Kalpataru*, celebrating the life and times of the saint. Besides a readable introduction giving the life-sketch in Kannada the booklet contains select verses in Sanskrit with annotations in Kannada by Prof. Pandurangi.

M. P. PANDIT.

A correction

In the last May issue on page 87 (in Some Notes on Plates — Durga Mahishamardini) please read: The Mahishamardini panel is from the Mahabalipuram cave which belongs to 7th century A.D. during the reign of the Pallava king Mamalla or Narasimhavarman.

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NEWS AND REPORTS

STUDENTS' HOME, MADRAS

REPORT FOR 1960-1961

The total number of boys in the Home during the period was 275, of whom 71 belonged to Backward Classes and Scheduled Castes. The High School section had 148 students on its roll. All the 32 pupils of VI Form were sent up for the S.S.L.C. examination, and 27 were declared eligible for College courses. The Collegiate Section had 26 students. All the 24 students who appeared for different University examinations came out successful. The Technical Institute had 101 students. In the Final Diploma-Examination, 21 out of 25 passed, with 2 first classes. The Centenary Elementary School in Mylapore had 428 boys and girls. The Higher Elementary School, Malliankaranai had a strength of 171 boys and girls. In the attached Hostel, there were 41 boarders. The total expenditure on all the sections put together amounted to Rs. 2,65,160 and receipts were Rs. 2,42,322. The deficit of Rs. 22,838 was met from the Revenue Reserve Account. As the Students' Home maintains the boys free the increase in the cost of living has thrown great strain on the management and hence they appeal for greater help while thanking the public.

RAMAKRISHNA SEVASHRAMA, CONTAI

Along with running a dispensary and a hostel, the centre has a fine temple and a library. The 126th birthday ceremony of Sri Ramakrishna Deva was celebrated with due eclat from 31-3-61 to 2-4-61. The functions of the festival were special puja, homa, scriptural study, essay and lecture competition among school and college students; devotional songs by many Hari-sankirtan parties; religious lectures and music by noted persons, and distribution of Prasad to about 7000 persons. All these functions were well attended and all gained much inspiration and pleasure from this cultural ceremony.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, KANPUR

REPORT FROM *Jan.* 1960 *to Mar.* 1961

The above centre runs a Higher Secondary School, a Library and Reading Room, a Hospital (having two departments, General and Eye), and two Vyayamshalas. Weekly classes were held on Sunday Evenings and birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother, and Swami Vivekananda were celebrated with great eclat. There were 498 boys in the High School. The High School final examination passes were 80%. The Library contained 5,350 volumes on 31st March, 1961. During the period 5,021 books were issued to the students and the public. The total number of patients treated in the Hospital during the year was 1,81,064. During the year under review an X-Ray plant with accessories was purchased. While thanking the sympathisers and donors the management appeal for funds for paying off loans and the extension of the school and other activities.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, MANGALORE

REPORT FROM *Jan.* 1960 *to Mar.* 1961

The above centre runs a Boys' Home and a Charitable Dispensary. The number of boarders during the period was 42. Of these students 35 were free, 2 concession holders and 5 paying. In the Balakashrama an attempt is made to impart integral education through the inculcation of spiritual values in their widest sense. The Dispensary treated 45,987 patients of which 8,254 were new cases. 3,227 injections, 150 Dental extractions and 473 laboratory investigations were done during the period under review. While thanking the supporters and donors the management appeal for funds for the maintenance of the Boys' Home and the Charitable Dispensary.

RAMAKRISHNA ADVAITA ASHRAMA, KALADY

REPORT FOR 1956, '57 & '58

In 1958 the Brahmanandodayam High School had a strength of 245 pupils (139 boys and 106 girls), and 14 teachers. The school library had 1,920 books. The Brohmanandodayam Sanskrit Upper Primary School, where Sanskrit is compulsory had on its rolls 283 pupils with 8 divisions and 14 teachers. The Lower Primary (Basic) School, which was started in 1950, had 315 pupils and 6 teachers. There were 26 boarders in the Gurukulam at the end of 1958. A Gymnasium and an Auditorium had been added during the period. Apart from the cultural activities, conducting lectures, publishing books and giving educational help, the Ashrama also manages an Orphanage for Harijans. 13,246 cases were treated by the Sarada Ayurveda Vaidya Mandiram run by the Ashrama. 531 surgical cases (Minor) were also treated. The Vivekananda Library and Reading Room had 3,598 volumes. The management while thanking the patrons and benefactors appeal for funds for the improvement of the schools, hostels, orphanage, vaidyasala, library and publications.

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.... Be bold and face
The Truth ! Be one with it ! Let visions cease.
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XLVIII AUGUST 1961 No. 4

FROM THE TREE OF DIVINE LORE

One day those Gopa-boys, led by Rama, played together ; and (on their return) they complained to his mother Yasoda, 'Krishna has eaten earth.'

Taking Krishna (her son) by the hand, and anxious about his health, she rebuked him, whose eyes were swimming (as it were) with fear, and said :

'O my naughty child, why did you eat earth in secret, as these boys, thy friends, tell me and even thy brother Rama (tells me too).'

The Lord Krishna replied : 'I did not eat earth, o mother ! all these tell a lie ; do thou, mother, see thyself whether they speak true, look into my mouth.'

(The mother said) : 'If so, open thy mouth !' Thus asked, the glorious Hari of unlimited powers, in the form of a sportful child, opened his mouth.

Therein she saw the whole universe, mobile and immobile, the sky, the mountains and seas, earth, air, fire, the moon and the stars, as also Vraja and herself. And she was filled with fear (and beside) herself and could not believe her own eyes. Then she mused thus :

'Is this a dream ? Is it a vision, exhibited by the Lord ? Or a delusion of my own mind ? Or is it some inborn divine power of this my child's own ?

Since it is something which cannot be distinctly made out by the mind, the heart, efforts and words, I bow to that Supreme, which is beyond comprehension, on which depends all the world, by which it is pervaded, which is grasped by the power of the mind, and from which all this proceeds.

'May He be my refuge, by whose Maya wrong notions arise thus : I am ; he is my husband ; this is my son ; I am the chaste queen and mistress of all the wealth of the Lord of Vraja ; these Gopas and Gopis and all this wealth of cattle are mine.'

When she had thus a distinct grasp of Truth, the Supreme Lord cast (again) over her the Vaishnava power (spell) which made her love Him as her own son.

In a moment Yasoda lost all her memory of the vision and, as before, placed her son on her lap with a heart overflowing with intense affection.

(*Bhagavata*, Sk. X, 8, 32-44.)

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LIFE AND ITS MEANING

The thought that perturbs the mind of a fairly introspective individual of any time seems to be 'the meaning of life'. The statement seems to be presumptive but a little analysis will show that it is a fact. The objection, first and foremost, would be that majority of mankind do not consider the question at all. There is no denial of this truth but is all mankind introspective, does it discriminate between what is good and what is evil? Most of us are satisfied with what is pleasant and do not care to seek for the good; our standard of good and evil is of the senses, whatever the senses feel and perceive as pleasing is taken as good. But not long after, sets the reaction when the senses grow weak and cannot meet the demands made on them by the increasing number of desires of the mind. If the experiences of the senses were good, why should they turn into evil!

> 'The self-existent Supreme Lord inflicted an injury upon the sense-organs by creating them with out-going tendencies; therefore a man perceives only outer objects and not the inner Self,'[1]

says the *Katha Upanishad*, so it is no wonder that most of us are beguiled by our senses and like the ostrich in the desert deny the existence of the reality, and suffer misery. Continuing, the same verse says that some strong-willed and intelligent person attained *illumination* by withdrawing the senses with the object of gaining liberation. The withdrawing of the senses from their objects leads to introspection and introspection paves way to higher thoughts such as 'meaning of life', meaning of death, etc. Introspection therefore is the quality that marks man from man and it is the quality that leads man to his goal.

Now life is defined as a

> 'state of ceaseless change and functional activity particular to organized matter, and especially to the portion of it constituting an animal or plant before death.'[2]

It is accepted and established by modern scientists that plants too have life. It is also a matter of common experience that the rains give a good crop of vegetation useful or otherwise and the summer scorches them off the face of the earth specially in the torrid zone; trees and plants are seen to grow and then cease to grow; when they put forth shoots, flowers and fruits they are said to be alive whereas when they remain dried up for a long time they are said to be dead. As this too is life does the range of our question touch it? We have to at the outset take into consideration life existing in everything and then take particular notice of human life, for the Hindu scriptures tell us that all living beings are only working out their own actions which they accumulated in their past births; actions done by them not as animals or plants but as human beings.

> 'Those who consider the actions enjoined in the Vedas and the Smritis as the highest goal of human life, and thus deluded do not know that there is something higher to be sought after, they after enjoying the good results of their actions in the heavens enter again into this world or lower than this,'[3]

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[1] परांचि खानि व्यतृणत्स्वयंभूस्तस्मात्पराङ् पश्यति नान्तरात्मन् *Kath. U.* 4. 1.

[2] cf. Concise Oxford Dictionary.

[3] इष्टापूर्तं मन्यमाना वरिष्ठं नान्यच्छ्रेयो वेदयन्ते प्रमूढाः। नाकस्य पृष्ठे ते सुकृतेऽनुभूत्वा इमं लोकं हीनतरं वा विशन्ति॥ *Mundaka U.* 1-2-10.

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says the *Mundaka Upanishad*. The animals and plants have not got the faculty of discriminating what is good and what is pleasant, so their actions do not accumulate any results, on the other hand man is a thinking animal endowed with the power of distinguishing between the two and therefore there is no way out for him but to reap the consequences of his actions. Whereas, therefore, the plants and animals will evolve into higher and higher beings man can either evolve or involve himself. As we see it from nature the meaning of life seems to be to evolve into a higher being.

In this world, however, man being the highest evolved being what would or rather should he try to evolve into? It is the scriptures that come to our help in solving this problem. They clearly state that a being who after obtaining a human body passes out of this world without knowing 'this Immutable One' indeed is a miser[4]: one who is possessor of the immense wealth of one's own real Self which is immutable but yet enjoys not the usefulness of knowing it. So, it is to know one's true nature that a being takes birth in the human body, but very few realise this and get entangled more and more in this world. In the Gita, the Lord says, 'One among a thousand try for perfection'[5] and how true it is! Men run after all the worldly things and seek pleasure in them and never even think of the higher values of life, but how precious human life is, only sages have understood. Sri Sankara in his *Vivekachudamani* says,

> 'Three things are very difficult to obtain but by the *grace* of God; a human body, the desire for liberation and the protecting care of a holy person.'[6]

Unless man evolves into a god-man he has to repeat the rounds of birth and death, there is either a movement upward or a travel downward. Man has to choose between the two and 'as he sows so will he reap'.

But how can this liberation be obtained is the question that will naturally haunt us next. The Vedas say that this liberation can be attained by knowing God, by knowing our true nature, by knowing Brahman and for this we have to get rid of desire for enjoyment, free ourselves from attachment to wealth, relations and our own bodies.

Here come all the problems: the world that is grasped by the senses seems so tangible, so real and the God, spoken of, seems so uncertain and unreal that our minds do not like to leave what is here and now and seek after something which is hereafter. We can never convince the mind that the world with all its fauna and flora, with its rivers and mountains and above all, with the beloved ones is unreal. Speaking about this attachment Swami Vivekananda says,

> 'Great is the tenacity with which man clings to the senses. Yet, however substantial he may think the external world in which he lives and moves, there comes a time in the lives of individuals and of races when, involuntarily, they ask, "Is this real?" To the person who never finds a moment to question the credentials of his senses, whose every moment is occupied with some sort of sense-enjoyment — even to him death comes, and he also is compelled to ask, "Is this real?"'

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[4] यो वा एतदक्षरं अविदित्वाऽस्माल्लोकात्प्रैति स कृपणः *Br. U.* 3-8-10.

[5] मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु कश्चित् यतति सिद्धये *Gita* 7-3.

[6] दुर्लभं त्रयमेवैतद्देवानुग्रहहेतुकम्।
मनुष्यत्वं मुमुक्षुत्वं महापुरुषसंश्रयः॥ *Vivekachudamani* 3.

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Fortunate are the few who realise the evanescence of the worldly objects and of their own bodies and dedicate their lives to the search after truth, after reality. Swami Premananda* used to say: 'Some learn by observance, some learn by hearing and some others learn by suffering.' Some realise it late in life after experiencing all the sorrows and miseries of life whereas some others taking lessons from the pages of the life of sages and from the book of nature by observation understand it early. These latter, the sages say, had already gone through the mill in their past lives and that what was needed to arouse dispassion in them towards the worldly objects was supplied by their keen observation of nature. And when once they realise the ephemerality of the things worldly nothing can hold them back: neither a darling of a child, nor a beautiful and faithful wife nor the pleasures of a king's palace. Gautama lacked nothing of this world and all his life in the palace he was surrounded by health, youth, beauty and vigour, but when he stepped out of his pleasure garden he saw the sick, the poor, the old and decrepit and the dead. This set him athinking. If there was to be death why should there be birth at all! Was there no way out of this labyrinth? He was determined to find it out, not only for himself but for the whole world.

And Gautama, the Buddha found out that the meaning of life is not in living to satisfy one's senses but living it to attain Nirvana at the end of it. Shape your life, he says, so that others may not only be not harmed but be benefited by it. Love all, extend your love even to the animals, desire not anything, do not injure anything, are some of the teachings of the Buddha which are included in the famous eight-fold path prescribed by him for the liberation of man from this *samsara*.

This discrimination between the real and the unreal is the first step in one's progress towards liberation, and this discrimination we must remember is only an intellectual assent and is born of a theoretical acceptance of transitoriness of the worldly objects and therefore it is necessary to pursue the other steps and get this discrimination firmly planted so that it can stand the onslaughts of nature which present themselves in the form of temptations. The second step is to be free from desire for enjoyment here or hereafter. Next is the controlling of the inner and outer sense-organs, and to acquire tranquillity of mind, forbearance and faith in the existence of God. Last but of utmost importance is the keen desire for liberation.

Real desire for liberation will, however, dawn only when all the attractions for life taste insipid due to constant thinking of God, close and long association with holy men and constant prayer. It is an arduous task but nothing daunts men of obdurate wills, that is why we find scientists trying to send even men into space to explore those regions. Man has conquered many forces of nature but not his own nature, he is still a slave to his senses and as such lives in eternal fear even of his neighbours. So, it is quite apparent to us that not all the inventions of science can give us peace, let alone liberation from the cycle of birth and death. The inner conquest alone can give man peace of mind and peace of soul, a 'peace that passeth understanding'.

The Vedas describe *pravritti* and *nivritti*, one by which man can prevent himself from sliding downwards and the other by which he can attain to direct illumination. The pravritti marga, or the path of action, of performances of sacri-

* One of the sannyasin disciples of Sri Ramakrishna.

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fices leads to pitriloka or devaloka if the actions are done with a desire for results, with a motive to enjoy the heavens of the manes or the devas, whereas the same actions or sacrifices if done without any motive but as an offering to the Lord lead to the purification of the mind. The *Isavasya Upanishad* says,

> 'One desirous of living a hundred years in this world should do so by performing action. For you, who cherish such a desire, and consider yourself as a man, there is no other way except by performing action to keep the action from staining you.'[7]

Sri Sankara commenting on this verse says, that a person desirous of living in this world should perform religious duties and righteous action so that evil action did not cling to him. It is a matter of common experience also, that man cannot remain without activity. He has to be busy either on the physical or on the mental plane. Even the so-called lazy and idle are intensely active in their minds dreaming wild dreams, and their minds are really 'devil's workshops', in order therefore, to prevent evil thoughts and ward off bad actions we have to be doing actions enjoined in the scriptures. That religious action is potent enough to bring one to the doors of liberation is conceded even by Sri Sankara in his commentary on the 20th sloka of the third chapter of the Bhagawad Gita. He says that the sloka can be interpreted in two ways: if Janaka and others were illumined persons even before they engaged themselves in action they did work to set example to the world impelled by their prarabda karma; otherwise they took recourse to action as a means to the purification of their nature, *sattwa*, and gradually attained liberation. Without going into the controversy whether work alone is potent to bring about liberation or not, it is clear that work plays an important part in our religious life. But it must be remembered that by work we mean only religious duties and righteous action.

The other, the path of nivritti, the path of renunciation consists in the renunciation of desires, renunciation of attachment to worldly or heavenly enjoyments, discrimination between the real and the unreal and so on as already dealt with.

The question that naturally crops up is, how can we know that a man gets liberated if he is righteous or renounces all attachments? If the liberation comes with death it is not possible to know from a dead person whether he has attained liberation or has been involved again into this world. The answer is that there are not only the scriptures who assure us about the destiny of the righteous and the unrighteous but that one has not to wait for death to get liberation but can become liberated even while living, if he possesses intense hankering for liberation, and works strenuously for it.

What is, actually, the meaning of liberation? Man usually identifies himself with the body, the senses or the mind and suffers anguish when the body or the mind is afflicted. This identification of the mind or the body with our self is due to delusion. If we were only the bodies then in that case we would be dead everyday when we go to sleep; for in that state we are not aware of our bodies; if we were only the minds, we would be no more living when we passed into dreamless sleep and the mind and body ceased to function. So we are really something different from the body and the mind, to know this and thus disentangle ourselves from the identification with the body and the mind is liberation. It is not the intellectual

[7] कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि जिजीविषेच्छतं समाः।
एवं त्वयि नान्यथेतोऽस्ति न कर्म लिप्यते नरे।
Isa U. 2.

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understanding that is required but the practical experience, we must be able to look on whatever takes place to the body or the mind as mere spectators. When we are able to do it we have attained the goal. The world no more holds fear for us, tranquillity will spread in our being. It is said that those who come in contact with such persons of tranquil minds feel peace within themselves too. And on the authority of such Sruti and Smriti passages as,

> 'His sense-organs do not depart elsewhere (for transmigration)'[8], 'Already a liberated-soul he is freed (from further rebirths)'[9], 'Here itself transmigration is conquered by those, whose minds dwell in equanimity'[10]

we can safely conclude that one who has attained to such a state here is definitely liberated here and hereafter.

How to know a person who has obtained liberation? What are the signs that distinguish him from others? The Bhagawad Gita gives the characteristics of such a person, a liberated-in-life, in several places. In the second chapter Sri Krishna describes him as a *sthitaprajna*, in the fourteenth as the *gunatita*, in the fifth as *Brahmavit* and so on. Giving the description of the *sthitaprajna* Sri Krishna says,

> 'When one completely wipes out all the desires of the mind and is satisfied in his own Atman then he is said to be a *Sthitaprajna*. Unperturbed in misery, unelated in pleasure, devoid of attachment, fear and anger and unshaken in will such a one is called a *muni*. When he withdraws his senses from the sense objects as a tortoise withdraws its limbs, his illumination is established.'[11]

In the fifth chapter Sri Krishna says,

> 'Of constant will and undeluded the Brahmavit lives in Brahman.'[12]

Sankara has given all these descriptions of the jivanmukta, culled as it were, from Sruti and Smriti, in his *Vivekachudamani*; some passages of which we quote here.

> 'Whose illumination becomes steady, whose bliss is continuous, by whom the world is forgotten, he is said to be a *jivanmukta*.' (428) 'He whose cares about the phenomenal state have reached calmness (subsided never to rise again), who, though, possessed of a body consisting of parts is devoid of parts (whole like Brahman) and whose mind is free from anxiety, is accepted as a jivanmukta.' (430) 'A characteristic of the jivanmukta is the absence of the ideas of "I" and "mine" even in this existing body which follows as a shadow.' (431) 'Looking everywhere with an eye of equality in this world full of elements possessing merits and demerits, and distinct by nature from one another, is a characteristic of one liberated-in-life.' (433) 'He who has realised his Brahmanhood aided by the Scriptures, and is free from the bondage of transmigration, is known as liberated-in-life.' (437)

Thus from the experience of sages, and on the authority of the Scriptures it is evident that mukti is not only possible but possible here and in this very life.

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[8] न तस्य प्राणा उत्क्रामन्ति *Br. U.* 4. 4. 6.

[9] विमुक्तश्च विमुच्यते *Katha U.* 5-1.

[10] इहैव तैर्जितः सर्गो एषां साम्ये स्थितं मनः
Gita 5-19.

[11] प्रजहाति यदा कामान् सर्वान्पार्थ मनोगतान्।
आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टस्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते॥
Gita 2-55.

दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः।
वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते॥
2-56.

यदा संहरते चायं कूर्मोऽङ्गानीव सर्वशः।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यः तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता॥
2-58.

[12] स्थिरबुद्धिरसंमूढो ब्रह्मवित् ब्रह्मणिस्थितः॥
Gita 5-20.

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In brief we arrive at the following conclusions: that life has a meaning, that every creature that exists is evolving to go towards God, but that man alone is endowed with the capacity to reach God and be liberated for ever from this round of birth and death. Though in ultimate analysis the path to liberation is one, the scriptures recognize the pravritti and nivritti margas, the former for those who still retain some desire for enjoyment and the latter for those who have given up all desires. In these are included the four paths, devotion, action, meditation and knowledge, by one or a combination of these one has to try to get liberated. Another conclusion is that liberation can be had even while living and that is the highest aim, the highest meaning of life.

GURU, GURU-BHAKTI AND GURU-KRIPA

K. R. R. SASTRY

In this age of dialectic materialism there is a tilt towards published books. Will books by themselves be a substitute for the genuine Acharya? Can mere books solve the emerging difficulties of the *sadhana*? Sri Sri Aurobindo had a difficulty in the practice of *pranayama*, Lele Maharaj assisted him. What would have been the development of Narendra if he had not come under the motherly care of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa? Mere books are like the dry prescriptions of a quack. So, the base of our spiritual quest is in the deep search of a Guru. Unlike books the Guru is a lighted candle igniting the disciple's soul. Guru is like a father. Guru is comparable to the spring season. Thayumanavar, a Siddhanta Tamil Saint, calls the Guru 'Kinder than the mother'. In Sanskrit, 'Guru' means 'the remover of darkness'. *Gukaramandhakaram ca, rukaram teja ucyate, ajnanagrasakam brahmā gurureva na samsayah.* (*Guru-Gita*). The four pre-requisites for rightful development are: (1) Shastram — knowledge, (2) utsāha — genuine endeavour, (3) Guru— Teacher, (4) kalam — time.

Guru-Bhakti: The earnest seeker goes to the genuine Guru. As stated in the Bhagavad Gita, *tadviddhi pranipatena pariprashnena sevaya* (IV-34), through the modes of humility, earnest doubt and service the genuine pupil goes to the Guru. This Guru unlike the paid teacher makes the pupil absorbed in the teachings and to the pupil he says, *reality*, that is equipoise shines indeed. Verily, such a preceptor as e.g. Dattatreya is God Himself— '*Gurureva Param Brahma*'.

Guru Kripa: The mercy of the Guru is limitless. Our epics are full of the abounding flow of Kripa of genuine Gurus. There are such dialogues in the Kathopanishad (Nachiketas and Yama) and Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (Yajnavalkya and Janaka). If we pass on to later times, the yearning of Thayumanavar to Maunaguru and the relationship between Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and his monastic disciples, are full of lessons to the seeker. If one reads silently the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, one will find the answers to bona-fiide doubts. As Sri Ramakrishna advises Bhavanath, we must 'stick to one path'. It is a projection in writing that has been attempted of the wonderful journey of the pupil through the stages of *na dehoham* (I am not this body) *na jivoham* (I am not this Jivatman) but *kevalah Shivoham* (verily I am Atman itself).

Most of us go through life 'with eyes half-shut, and with dull minds and heavy hearts'. *Advaitanubhava* (experience of non-duality) comes through the grace of Iswara (God), which is the Guru (the spiritual guide). And so, I bow to the Lord in the Guru.

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THE RAMAKRISHNA MOVEMENT AND THE FUTURE OF MANKIND

SWAMI BUDHANANDA

The Lord on His Resistless Path

In time there happens once in a while the thawing of the Timeless. These are the great occasions of the aggression of the Divine, so to say, on the process of history. The transcendental becomes vibrant in the life-turmoil and there occurs stupendous explosions of spirituality as a result of which go forth words of power and promise out of which are born mighty movements for regeneration of mankind.

Such was a moment when Sri Krishna spoke with reigns and whip in hand on the war front of Kurukshetra. The battle was to be fought anyway, the battle of Kurukshetra or of life. But to make this war field a *dharmakshetra* or operation righteousness, one has to fight the battle with the Lord as the Charioteer. The imperative of remembrance and fight going hand in hand (*mamanusmara yuddhya cha*), galvanized the future of India for millennia. The civil war was bloody no doubt, but the civilization had received an unerring sense of direction in the words of Sri Krishna. As a result of the explosions of truth in the Gita, not only accretions of the ancient religion fell off, but the eternal spirit within sparkled in new radiance.

Such was a moment when the Buddha spoke. Having preached his sermon to the five Bhikshus at Benares the Buddha said :

> 'Go ye now, O Bhikshus, for the benefit of the many, for the welfare of mankind, out of compassion for the world. Preach the doctrine which is glorious in the beginning, glorious in the middle, and glorious in the end, in the spirit, as well as in the letter. There are beings whose eyes are scarcely covered with dust, but if the doctrine is not preached to them, they cannot attain salvation. Proclaim to them a life of holiness. They will understand the doctrine and accept it.'[1]

From his words of power flowed waves of spiritual ministrations down centuries which transformed civilizations and renewed life on earth for vast multitudes of men and women.

Such was a moment when Christ spoke. Hearing from Mary Magdalene the message of resurrected Christ, the eleven disciples went to a mountain in Galilee where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him ; but some doubted.

> 'And Jesus came and spoke to them saying, all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things, whatever I have commanded you ; and, lo, I am with you all way, even unto the end of the world.'[2]

The impact of those great words are being felt to the end of the world even today.

Such was a moment when Sri Ramakrishna spoke. One day in 1884 while expounding the Vaishnava doctrine of 'compassion to all beings,' Sri Ramakrishna suddenly went into samadhi. Regaining partial consciousness he exclaimed,

> 'Talk of compassion for beings ! Will you an animalcule, bestow compassion on beings ? You wretch, who are you to bestow it ? No, no ; not compassion to *jivas* (embodied beings) but service to them as Siva (God).[3]

It required the genius of a Narendranath,—later Swami Vivekananda—to read in this Jiva-Siva aphorism of Sri Ramakrishna, a redemptive gospel for the regeneration of mankind.

Emerging from the room where he had heard those inspired words of Sri Ramakrishna, Narendranath, to the surprise of all, gave an

[1] Mahavagga : *Vinaya Pitaka*.

[2] *The New Testament*, St. Matthew XXVIII. 16-20.

[3] *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master*, 1952, p. 821.

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eloquent interpretation to the saying, emphasizing these points :

1. In this inspired saying a new mellowed means of experiencing truth was revealed by synthesizing dry, austere even cruel Vedanta with sweet devotion to the Lord.
2. Here it is shown that Vedanta of the forest can be brought to human habitation and that it can be applied in practice to the work-a-day world. Let everyman do everything he is doing, but let him be convinced that it is God that exists, manifested before him as the universe and all the beings in it. When the entire life is thus filled with God, serving Jiva as Siva, one is sure to realize his own divinity.
3. The devout aspirant in the path of devotion, when he serves Jiva as Siva or Narayana, will easily attain true devotion and have the aim of his life fulfilled.
4. The aspirant treading the path of action, when he works in the spirit of serving Siva in Jiva, realization of his goal will be far more easy.

Then the hero that he was, Narendranath at once declared ;

'If the divine Lord grants me an opportunity, I shall proclaim everywhere in the world this wonderful truth I have heard today. I will preach this truth to the learned and the ignorant, to the rich and the poor, to the Brahmanas and the Chandalas.'

In 1884 when Narendranath uttered those words nobody could perhaps imagine that this very declaration was a manifestation of the movement of the Lord who had already gone forth in the world.

Today the Ramakrishna Math and Mission are fairly well known in India and also not unknown in some other parts of the world. One is not, however, very sure whether or not Ramakrishna Math and Mission and their activities are as well understood as they are known. In popular perspective these twin institutions are variously looked upon as a monastic order for world renouncers, a monastic-cum-lay workers social service institution, a socially conscious but politically unconscious philanthropic body, a missionary organization with intriguing apathy for proselytization, a somewhat strange Hindu body with as much love for Krishna as for Christ, as much veneration for the Vedas as for the Bible.

Undoubtedly in all these various popular perspectives of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, there are elements of truth, but none of them fully reveal their soul.

In one of his most impassioned songs Swami Vivekananda sang :

'Move on, O Lord in Thy resistless path !
Till Thy high noon overspreads the world,
Till every land reflects Thy light,
Till men and women with uplifted head,
Behold their shackles broken, and
Know in springing joy, their life renewed.'

Truly speaking the Ramakrishna Math and Mission represent the movement of the Lord in His 'resistless path' for the renewal of human life on earth. More comprehensively and appropriately, the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, are therefore called the Ramakrishna Movement.

The Origin and the Development of the Movement

Let it not be thought that the Ramakrishna Movement came into being from any particular saying of Sri Ramakrishna. It issued from his entire life and teachings, love and benedictions though some teachings might appear to have been of decisive propelling drive.

The power behind the words of Sri Ramakrishna was his own life in which converged the world's spiritual experiences of millenniums. The fundamental truths which appeared to be fading away rendering human life confused and futile, became revivified in his personal experiences and thus got reoriented to the spirit and the tune of the times.

These fundamental truths, though revivified in his experiences might well have been lost to the world, unless Sri Ramakrishna had taken care before his passing away in 1886 to have indelibly written them with the flame of his unique love deep in the souls of his immaculate wife Sri Sarada Devi and a few chosen disciples, chief among whom was Swami Vivekananda.

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In the perfect and refreshing keeping of Sri Sri Saradamani's own spiritual experiences, the realized truths of Sri Ramakrishna's life retained their living dynamic spontaneity out of which the disciples drew unbounded inspiration for self-development and fulfilment. It was, however, mainly Swami Vivekananda who saw the necessity of power-projecting the redemptive implications of Sri Ramakrishna's life in the context of problems and necessities of humanity in the present and future.

This was why he gathered the world-renouncing brother-disciples after the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna who had given him specific instructions in this regard and a humble monastery was started at Baranagore in Calcutta on October 19, 1886. The world-renouncing disciples of Sri Ramakrishna took formal Sannyasa or vows of monks on the 7th May, 1887 and became full-fledged monks dedicated to the realization of God and good of the world. After a few shifts in location, at last from January 1, 1899, the place now known as Belur Math on the western bank of the Ganga opposite of Calcutta, became the Headquarters of the Ramakrishna Order.

After his return from the West where in 1893 he had delivered in the Parliament of Religions of Chicago, the spiritual message of India with love and authority, Swami Vivekananda with the help of his brother monks and lay disciples of Sri Ramakrishna formed on May 1, 1897 an Association called the Ramakrishna Mission. Seven years after the passing away of Swami Vivekananda this Association came to be registered in May 1909 under the Act XXI of 1860, and its management was vested in a Governing Body consisting of the Trustees of the Belur Math. The objectives of the previous Association which in a somewhat elaborated form came to be the objectives of the Mission as a registered body, were declared as follows :

(a) To impart and promote the study of the Vedanta and its principles as propounded by Sri Ramakrishna and practically illustrated by his own life and of comparative theology in its widest form.

(b) To impart and promote the study of arts, sciences and industries.

(c) To train teachers in all branches of knowledge above-mentioned and enable them to reach the masses.

(d) To carry on educational work among the masses.

(e) To establish, maintain, carry on and assist schools, colleges, orphanages, workshops, laboratories, hospitals, dispensaries, houses for the infirm, the invalid, and the afflicted, famine relief works and other educational and charitable works and institutions of a like nature.

(f) To print and publish and to sell or distribute, gratuitously or otherwise, journals, periodicals, books or leaflets that the Association may think desirable for the promotion of its objects.

(g) To carry on any other work which may seem to the Association capable of being conveniently carried on in connection with, and calculated directly or indirectly to promote, any of the before-mentioned objects.

And all these works were to be done as worship of the Divine manifested in living beings for, as in the case of the Math the ultimate end was the liberation of the self and the good of the world, *atmano mokshartham jagaddhitaya cha.*

Work done in any other spirit was only forging another link in the fetters by which the world and humanity was bound. Here we can find the ancient message of the Gita finding a new orientation in the context of the modern times.

Functioning as it does in the brass-tacks of life, Ramakrishna Mission, however, keeps its vision fixed on the transcendental as typified in the significant monogram of the Order which is to be understood as follows :

'The wavy waters in the picture are symbolic of Karma, lotus of Bhakti, (devotion) and the rising sun, of Jnana (knowledge). The encircling serpent is indicative of Yoga and awakened Kundalini Sakti (the cosmic power residing hidden in every individual), while the Swan in the picture stands for the Paramatman (Supreme Spirit). Therefore the idea of the picture is that by the union of Karma, Jnana, Bhakti and Yoga, the vision of the Paramatman is attained.'

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Thus the Ramakrishna movement forged its way into history through its two wings the Math and the Mission. The former is the brotherhood of the monastics and the latter is the registered organization for carrying on works mentioned before in association with lay followers of the Order. Technically speaking though these are two separate organizations, practically they are two in one or one in two, for the Trustees of the former are Members of the Governing Body of the latter. The members of the Math are also members of the Mission and largely responsible for carrying on the activities of the latter.

By its wing of the Math, the Movement kept its firm grip over the timeless, the imponderable and essential traditions of the most ancient spiritual culture of the world. By its wing of the Mission, it flowed in time, entered into the problems of humanity and gave succour to the needy and helpless, all the time trying to bring on human life the impacts of the spirit. The Math gave the movement vertical ascension, the Mission, horizontal diffusion. The former gave it spiritual stability, that latter humanitarian dynamism. If the Math is the anchor, Mission is the sail.

Vivekananda's Message, Method and Machinery

The magnificence and munificence of Swami Vivekananda as a spiritual architect of humanity cannot be sufficiently measured unless we see in a single sweep his wonderful life-work. In his oceanic heart enlightened by the realization of the Supreme Spirit, Swami Vivekananda felt the agonies of entire humanity. Commissioned by Sri Ramakrishna to do the 'Mother's work,' he faced the magnitude of his task with the vision of the Rishi that he was and planned and executed his work with the dexterity of an Apostle of Destiny. Realizing well that the world malady was in the ultimate analysis a spiritual problem though its expressions in the two hemispheres were different and that the advent of Sri Ramakrishna was for the good of entire humanity, he felt deeply the urgency of spreading his message throughout the world. This is why he went to America in 1893 to represent Hinduism in the Parliament of Religions. In broadcasting the message of the Master he brooked no opposition and spared no exertion for he knew for certain the Vedanta as lived and taught by Sri Ramakrishna when applied variously in varying situations could help all in progressively realizing the ultimate end of life.

Swami Vivekananda's recorded teachings run into eight volumes and more in which are compressed the wisdom of the ages. 'Be and make,' let this be our motto, said the Swami, summarizing his entire message. Let man manifest the divinity that is within himself and let him make the world reflect the spiritual oneness of the universe. That is the entire task in the world.

Swami Vivekananda did not remain content by giving this message alone. The practical seer that he was he also prescribed the method which consisted in 'Renunciation and Service,' to put this message into action. In a world habituated in the practices of acquisition and aggrandisement, the method of 'renunciation and service' could not be easily brought to prevail. For putting the message in operation through this method Swami Vivekananda felt the necessity of a new machinery. And the Ramakrishna Math and Mission was brought into being for this purpose. Setting this message-method-machinery in vigorous working order as a lever for the uplift of humanity, Swami Vivekananda passed away in 1902.

From its humble beginning in a haunted house in 1886 with a few begging monks who did not have a square meal everyday, and a few lay followers, the Movement which bears the name of Sri Ramakrishna has grown into a world organization within 74 years. With branches in many countries, this organization with incalculable potentiality for good of humanity, is a phenomenon to reckon with in the contemporary history of mankind.

The interesting story of the development of this organization through various vicissitudes,

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unfavourable and favourable, has been authentically recorded. Those who are interested in knowing the detailed history of Math and Mission will do well to read that fine publication.[4] Here it is possible for us only to provide an inkling, sufficient enough just to give an idea of the activities associated with the Movement.

What Facts and Figures can tell. Activities of the Movement in 1959

The activities of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission are various and fall under different headings like, medical service, educational work, work for women, rural uplift work among the labouring and backward classes, relief work, work of spreading the spiritual message of India to the western countries, spiritual and cultural ministration in India and Asiatic countries.

The latest report of the Movement shows that in December 1959, including the Headquarters at Belur Math, West Bengal, India, there were altogether 74 Mission Centers and 66 Math Centers. Moreover attached to those branch centers there were 22 sub-Centers.

Among these, 45 Mission Centers, 15 combined Math and Mission Centers, and 29 Math Centers are in India, 2 Mission Centers, 6 combined Math and Mission Centers and 3 Math Centers are in Pakistan; 2 Mission Centers in Burma; 1 Mission Center each in Ceylon, Singapore, Fiji and Mauritius, 1 Math Center each in Switzerland, England, Argentina, and 10 Math Centers in the United States of America.

Medical Service: In 1959 there were 12 indoor hospitals, which accommodated 22,582 patients, and 65 outdoor dispensaries, which treated 28,90,903 cases, including old ones. The Veterinary section of one Center treated 2,692 animals.

Educational Work: In the field of education, the impressive variety of institutions run by the Math and Mission include: General Residential Colleges, B.T. Colleges, Basic Training Colleges, Junior Basic Training Colleges, Colleges for Physical Education and Rural Higher Education, School of Agriculture, Social Education Organisers Training Centers, Engineering schools, Junior Technical or Industrial Schools, Multi-purpose Schools, Senior Basic Schools, Junior Basic Schools, Lower and other grades of schools, Nurses Training Centers, Students Hostels and Homes. In 1959 altogether 38,702 boys and 18,044 girls studied in various educational institutions run by the Math and Mission in India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Singapore, Fiji and Mauritius.

Work for Women: For the regeneration of India, the two important works to which Swami Vivekananda drew pointed attention of his followers and countrymen, were the work for the women and work for the masses. The Math and Mission are therefore specially committed to those two aspects of the national work.

Typical of the work done specially for women were running institutions for general and technical education; hospitals, maternity houses, domiciliary and maternity clinics, invalid women's home, and women's welfare center.

In another direction Ramakrishna Movement's sustained work for the uplift of women attained a fulfilment of its own with the establishment of a nunnery for women renouncers of the world, with the name Sri Sarada Math on the 2nd December, 1954, on the eastern bank of the Ganga, near Dakshineswar, the seat of Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual ministration. Though started under the guidance and inspiration of the Ramakrishna Order, Sri Sarada Math, was made a legally independent body by a registered Deed of Trust on the 9th September, 1959. Thenceforth, Sri Sarada Math is being run independently by their own Trustees, who are nuns. One hopes and prays that from this Order of nuns bearing the name Sri

[4] *History of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission* by Swami Gambhirananda published by Advaita Ashrama, 5 Dehi Entally Road, Calcutta 14, 1957, pp. 466. Price Rs. 10.

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Sarada Devi, will emerge Brahmavadinis, and inspire the womenfolk of the world to manifest their highest potentiality, their divinity.

Rural Uplift Work among the Labouring and Backward Classes : One of the abiding concerns of the Organization from its inception has been the condition of the poor masses in India. Apart from awakening the educated and well-to-do section of the people to their duties in this regard, in their humble way the Math and Mission, have all along tried to carry the light of education to the backward classes, and help them in various other ways. For the labouring classes workers of the Mission conducted a number of night schools. Apart from this, through celebration of religious festivals and fairs in different parts of the country, the masses and classes were brought nearer in fellowship of religious worship and cultural understanding. Preaching and educative tours with magic lanterns, gramophones, etc. were also undertaken. In the various educational institutions of the country, boys and girls from backward classes received special consideration. In the precincts of the institutions run by the Math and Mission the separating caste-distinctions not only fall off automatically, but children of different communities learn to live together in mutuality of regard and affection. And this is happening all the time without any declaration of ' jehad ' against caste.

Relief Work : By the side of its multifarious permanent constructive work, from its very inception, the Ramakrishna Math and Mission have been ever ready to promptly organize ameliorative and healing services whenever the nation was faced with sudden calamities caused by freaks of nature, follies of men, or scourges of pestilence or epidemic.

From an incomplete record it is gathered that from 1896 to 1959 the Math and Mission did about 360 major relief works in India, Burma and Ceylon, during calamities and hardships issuing from such variety of causes as famine, flood, fire, epidemics of various sorts, cyclone and tornado, riot, earthquake and land slide, scarcity of water and cloth. Evacuee and refugee relief and refugee rehabilitations were done on very large scales during some of the worst national calamities.

Apart from these, hundreds of small relief works were done by various centers wherever local need arose.

In the year 1959 flood relief work was done in eight districts in different parts of India. Besides, a small fire relief work was done in one district.

Work outside India : In fact the word ' foreign ' does not go very well with the activities of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, which though originated in India, are verily world organizations. No branch of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission has been exported from India. They are home-grown ones with roots in the soil.

In 1959 in the 17 Centers of the Afro-Asian countries the Math and Mission conducted work more or less on Indian lines, such as educational, medical, cultural and spiritual. The 13 Centers in the Western world, where high educational and medical service standards are maintained, the work of the Movement is carried in cultural and spiritual lines. In 1959 one Western Brahmacharin received Sannyasa, and eight Western probationers received Brahmacharya. In the same year five Western Brahmacharinis received Sannyasa and three women probationers received Brahmacharya. Memberships in the Centers are slowly but steadily rising, and cultural contacts are on the increase, through publications and participation in the spiritual and intellectual life of the nations.

Spiritual and Cultural Ministrations : In the ultimate analysis all the activities of the Ramakrishna movement are to be understood as spiritual ministrations in different human contexts. Yet spiritual ministration by itself, has its own connotation. This is being done continuously through the publication of ' Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature ', personal spiritual guidance given by the spiritual preceptors of the Order to thousands of seekers ;

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preaching and exposition of scriptures and providing occasional spiritual retreats for lay devotees. Through observances of various religious festivals, the Centers of the Movement established real points of contacts between people of different faiths.

On the cultural side, which need not necessarily be dissociated from spiritual ministration, the several Centers conducted libraries and reading rooms and published ten magazines in various languages. Several Sanskrit schools were also run. Epitomizing the Movement's grand global cultural aspirations there stands in Calcutta today a magnificent Institute in which East and West, North and South all meet and meet intimately, to know, understand, learn and love.

Under this heading should also be mentioned unobtrusive but significant work that is being done in various Centers to inculcate in various ways in younger generation the highest spiritual and cultural ideals and values known to man.

Training Center for the Novitiates: The future of this beneficent movement depends largely on types of monks this Order is able to produce. Fully convinced of the fact that good monk-making need not necessarily be left to chance, the Order has taken special care to start a Training Center for the novitiates and so device the training of the new aspirants as to harmoniously combine practices of spiritual disciplines, intellectual pursuits, and learning by doing how to actualize the ideal in practice. Nestled in the Headquarters, the Training Center forms a dynamic new core of the Order, whence are coming out year after year, young men dedicated to the ideals of liberation of the spirit and good of humanity.

Facts Figures cannot tell: Though something has been said by facts and figures regarding Ramakrishna Math and Missions activities, this cannot be taken to be a comprehensive appraisal of what this great Movement has done and is doing by the grace of the Lord. It is a truism to say that in Ramakrishna Movement, Sri Ramakrishna comes first. The impacts of Sri Ramakrishna's life and teachings cannot therefore be dissociated from the activities of the Movement. By the same computation what Swami Vivekananda did for humanity is also to be considered as the activity of the Ramakrishna Movement. In how many inscrutable ways Sri Ramakrishna has been helping humanity cannot be adequately gauged by ordinary mortals.

In his own life he proved God on earth and the divine potentiality of man and woman. He vindicated the spiritual values for which Indian civilization had stood from time immemorial, testified the truth of all religions and established the rationale of harmony among religions and gave the whole human civilization a sense of direction. He not only reestablished *moksha* or liberation of the Spirit as the supreme value of life, but also showed how God-experience was to go in for field operation for raising the harvest of human welfare. Sri Ramakrishna gave to the world a galaxy of saints, both men and women, who by the grace of their Guru and the power of their illumination have helped innumerable thirsting aspirants on the path of illumination. Carrying their sainthood lightly, Apostles of Sri Ramakrishna went about in the world with a wonderful and uncommon mobility and uplifted humanity wherever they travelled. They brought the reality of God-experience in the flow of the work-a-day world in such a homely manner, that shorn of its freakish prohibitiveness spirituality became the bread of life with the multitudes.

Belur Math, the headquarters of the Movement, became the symbol of all tested and progressive truths, unity in variety in religion, catholicity, harmony and synthesis. From here the sublime aspirations of humanity went out in the world as creative thought patterns. Bigotry, sectarianism, superstitions, crudities, oddities, which sometimes unfortunately get associated with religion and become cause of much shame and suffering, found here the citadel of a benign and an invincible vanquisher who conquered without dealing a blow.

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The spiritual preceptors of the Ramakrishna Order have been carrying on through an unbroken line of succession their ministrations silently but winklessly helping thousands upon thousands of earnest seekers in India and abroad. These activities of the Ramakrishna Movement, which belong to regions of imponderables cannot be shown in graph and statistics. But who among the discerning would say that the importance of such activities, activities if they could be called, is not just incalculable?

From the Indian standpoint it may perhaps be said with all humility that Ramakrishna Mission has been the one national institution of India which has gone out in the world to give something to the peoples of the world. By and large due to many historical reasons, India has been for centuries a debtor nation as it were. Unfortunately even after Independence, for whatever laudable and understandable reasons, India as a nation continued to be a debtor nation. But even more than half a century before Independence came, Ramakrishna Mission went out on behalf of India to give the message of Vedanta to the world, reassuming the role of a kindly teacher, India has always been down the ages.

Long before America gave India wheat and dollars, India, through Vivekananda, gave America and the world the most invaluable treasure of India, the message of Yoga and Vedanta, the quintessence of Hinduism. How the spiritual ministration of Vivekananda is slowly but surely influencing the spiritual thought and life in different parts of the world, has not escaped the notice of perceptive minds. The very fact of Vivekananda's going out of India as the authentic teacher of Hinduism, also filled the whole Indian nation with a powerful self-confidence, at a time when India had little reason to be self-confident. As Sri Aurobindo has said significantly, the going forth of Vivekananda in the world proved that India was alive not only to survive but also to conquer. It was one of the articles of Vivekananda's faith that India must conquer the world for the good of humanity. The mighty words of the great Swami come upon us like a powerful and transmuting charge of spirit:

> 'Up India and conquer the world with your spirituality. The only condition of national life, of awakened and vigorous national life, is the conquest of the world by Indian thought.'

Remember, Swami Vivekananda speaks here of a victory of the Spirit, a victory that defeats none, but enlivens, ennobles and enlightens everybody, a victory which is attained through the operation of a two-pronged attack, 'eternal love and service free'. If Swami Vivekananda were alive today, perhaps he would have changed his above saying a little. In place of 'The only condition of national life . . .', he should have said 'The only condition of survival of humanity, of possible meaningful, human existence . . .'. Those who are aware of the precarious human pass caused by the nuclear insanity and other associate-maladies in the world, and are also conversant with the meaning of Indian thought, such savants have freely acknowledged the urgency of the propagation of the message of Vedanta in the world. In this context the importance of the activities of the Ramakrishna Mission in and outside India was rightly measured when Mr Floyd H. Ross, Professor of World Religions, University of Southern California, wrote in an article in the *Vedanta and the West*:

> 'One of the most vital contemporary religious and educational movements in India today is the Ramakrishna movement. Under the leadership of men trained in the spirit of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, the Ramakrishna centres are living examples of how the timeless truths of the past have value when they are continuously relived and reinterpreted in the present .... The Ramakrishna Centres in the West are playing their own part quietly in helping to prepare the way for the united pilgrimage of mankind towards self-understanding and peace.'

Swami Vivekananda electrified the whole thought process of the Indian nation by reinterpreting the ancient religion of the Hindus in the light of Sri Ramakrishna's experiences and teachings. He dealt severe blows on every social evil, and gave the people powerful posi-

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tive man-making ideas and ideals. He brought Vedanta of forest and monastic retreats to the work-a-day world and made it here-and-now minded, while he also forced the intellectuals of the world to take serious note of the transcendental religion.

Vivekananda did not himself take and categorically forbade his followers to take any part in politics. Even then respected political leaders freely acknowledged that the life, teachings and work of Swami Vivekananda tremendously helped the freedom movement in India. It was largely due to his teachings that patriotism in India came to be imbued with a spirit of worship, selflessness and fearlessness. Out of his great love for his motherland he covered almost entire India with sore feet and bleeding heart and saw with his own eyes the pathetic conditions of the masses. And then he bequeathed to his countrymen the agonizing feeling for the poor, down-trodden and the miserable, which eventually became the wave of the future in the spiritual life of India.

His new mantram of 'daridra narayana-seva' or service to the poor looking on them as the manifestations of the Divine stirred the whole country to its depth and prostrate India was up again determined for national self-realization. Swami Vivekananda spoke of 'constructive work' in 1897. The constructive programme which he gave to the Ramakrishna Mission 'embraced in its comprehensive sweep almost all the major problems of Indian life, viz. liquidation of illiteracy, rural reconstruction, work among the backward and labouring classes, economic and social uplift of the people, removal of untouchability, female education, relief work in times of national calamities, preservation of indigenous culture, dissemination of the accumulated spiritual wisdom of the race and the evolution of the cultural 'synthesis.' While Ramakrishna Mission in its quiet but determined way continued to work out this programme, happily there came into being in India by ones and twos many social service institutions, which drew inspiration and guidance from the ideals and activities of the Ramakrishna Mission and thus by and large its programme became truly the national programme of India. In the post-Independence days the Five Year Plans of the Government of India have taken up seriously some of the items mentioned above.

Swami Vivekananda dinned in the ears of India the great necessity of acquiring the knowledge of science from the West in exchange of the knowledge of the spirit that India had, for the regeneration of India and humanity as a whole. It was the Ramakrishna Movement which by building technical institutions by the side of temples, the Tattwa-mandira by the side of Silpa-mandira, symbolically showed India and the world, the judicious, creative and progressive way of facing the new times. The entrance of the precincts of the Belur monastery, the Headquarters of the Movement is guarded by technical institutions! The beautiful temple of Sri Ramakrishna in the Belur Math faces an Industrial Institute which was started in 1921 with a score of students.

Undoubtedly India has taken up in right earnest Swami Vivekananda's emphasis on scientific education, social justice and material betterment. One is not, however, so sure whether or not India has been fully pursuing the spiritual values emphasized by the Swami. Vivekananda wanted Indians to learn the knowledge of sciences from the West in exchange of the spiritual knowledge of India, so that there might be a parity in the give and take, and mutuality of service, for the simultaneous benefit of both. Thousands of Indian students are going to the Western countries to learn and take, but how many competent Indians are really coming to the West to teach and give in a sphere of knowledge in which the West requires teaching?

Moreover the wave of secularization that is sweeping over India right now, will make the fulfilment of this national duty by humanity all the more difficult in future. The seemingly decreasing illumination-mindedness discernible in India of today is a really ominous sign for the future of human civilization. One however hopes that the true spirit of India will

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assert itself as soon as India has recouped after centuries of physical prostration.

Voicing his disappointment at the way Asia was going Western, a Western author writes :

> '....The Asiatic continent has surrendered to the West, taking over our science, our technology, our political ideals, our diplomatic traditions, our governmental practices, and many of our ideas about life. This must rank as the greatest disappointment of our whole era, for some of us have dreamed from our earliest youth that light must come from the Orient — a thing which has not been happening to any effective degree.' [5]

India as an Asiatic country will do well to take this criticism in good part as a comment on what is expected of the Orient and a challenge to deliver spiritual goods to the world. It may, however, be pointed out for the benefit of those occidentals who are anxious to know, that the expected light did come from the Orient, and continues to come. Vivekananda's message to the West is that light. Vivekananda gave the best part of his life to the service of the Western people and he gave the very essence of the spiritual knowledge of the East. And it is not as if after the death of Vivekananda his work stopped. The light he brought from the mother source of all illumination which is the Knowledge of Brahman, has been kept burning by his followers. Even when India was physically prostrate due to the not very kind treatment of the Occident she did not fail to feed that light with her own life. Those occidentals who expect light to come from the Orient and at the same time would not notice even such an effulgent spiritual luminary like Sri Ramakrishna, may not be looking for the light but for something else. There may be such an eventuality as the failure of light to come and there may also be such an eventuality as the failure of light to be seen !

Moreover in the post-Ramakrishna-Vivekananda period India continued to produce saints. India has not kept the light flowing out of their realizations under a bushell. This is not, however, at all to say that India can complacently think that her spiritual ministrations to the world were in any sense adequate.

One of the potent forces that will constantly endeavour to remind India of her duty unto herself and mankind is the Ramakrishna Movement. In this Movement's Philosophy faith is unafraid of reason, reason is untrammelled by dogma ; religion looks science in the face, and science is fascinated by the daring of the spirit. Man, every man, everywhere is the first and last concern of this Movement. What it seeks is the total regeneration of man for his self-fulfilment.

In the depths of the international life in the world the surface of which is ruffled by disturbing breakers, the Ramakrishna Movement is a sobering cradle of sanity, a recuperating nursing home of love, a saving harbour of Universality. Here is a nucleus and matrix of a possible superior human civilization on the basis of unity in variety.

It is India's primary responsibility and withal bounden duty to feed this Movement with the finest of human specimens she is able to produce, for if India loses the dynamism of the spirit represented by this Movement, she will be losing the very condition of her survival. It is also the duty of the thinking persons everywhere in the world to study this unique product of human civilization which holds a light, a hope, a trust, a promise, a message and a solace for humanity. This Movement, indeed constitutes a challenge to the best and the highest in every one everywhere in the world across the barriers of nationality, religion, politics or race.

The saga of the Ramakrishna Movement is an absorbing story which unravels itself in the contemporary history of mankind as a benign power in levels physical, mental and spiritual. And one can never say that one has done full justice to the narration, for the simple reason that it is verily the Movement of the Lord on His resistless path for renewal of life on earth.

[5] *International Conflict in the Twentieth Century* : A Christian View by Herbert Butterfield - Harper & Brothers, Publishers, New York, 1960, p. 106.

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SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA

SWAMI VIJNANANDA

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa had altogether sixteen sannyasin disciples during his lifetime. The best known and world-famous among them, his first spiritual heir, was of course Swami Vivekananda. The Swamiji's brilliant and versatile intellect, his vast command of the English language for vocal expression, his precocious spiritual yearning, his being chosen by Sri Ramakrishna for imparting his message to the world, his superhuman courage in embracing the difficult sannyasa-ashrama at so young an age of vigorous health of body and mind, his enthusiastic and brilliantly successful 'missionary' sojourn in America at a time when India and Hinduism were objects of contempt and derision in the world of nations and faiths, mark him out, in a class all his own, yet to be equalled since his passing away in 1902.

But very little is known, both here in India and abroad, of the other disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. It is not because they are less important either to their immediate Guru, or to the other observers of the world-wide movement, now known as the Ramakrishna Mission. The scintillating genius and personality of Swami Vivekananda were not obvious in some of them, but they were, nonetheless equally great in their unique way. The spiritual influence of the Great Master was equal if not greater in some of the surviving disciples. While a few of them seemed to blossom into great bhaktas, others showed a partiality for *nishkama-karma.* Yet others imbibed in full measure the wisdom of the Master or *jnana* from their close personal contact with their Guru, like small but separate pools of water reflecting in their own way the brilliant light of the sun. The greatest and the most important of Sri Ramakrishna's teachings, is that all religions are but the different paths to the one Great and Eternal Truth. That, God is One, call Him by what name you will. The grand success that has attended the efforts at propagation of this broad-based gospel, all the world over is proof, if one is needed, of the prophetic greatness of Sri Ramakrishna.

The Ramakrishna Mission, its Organization and Establishment

If Swami Vivekananda could be described as the founder-organiser of the Ramakrishna Mission at home and abroad, Swami Ramakrishnananda was the foundation and base of the world-wide movement. In the drawing up of the constitution, its nomenclature, form and shape, Swami Ramakrishnananda collaborated closely with Swami Vivekananda. The establishment of the Madras centre for South India, the effective propagation of the Mission's aims and ideals through all the South Indian cities is entirely due to the genius for organisation coupled with the spiritual stature of this twin heir of the Master, equal to his spiritual brother Swami Vivekananda in the majestic power for self-sacrifice and austerity.

Swami Ramakrishnananda was born in a Brahmin family devoted to the Goddess Kali and to tantric form of worship. He was christened as Shashibhushan, by his parents but to his family and intimate friends he was 'Shashi'.

In the disciplines and practices of the traditional religion, the young Shashi took after his strict and orthodox parents. Puja, Japa and meditation were part of the daily routine for a Brahmin boy, which his father, a strict disciplinarian taught him to observe right from early boyhood. It could be said that the seed of spirituality was well sown and nurtured in the young mind, to grow into a mighty tree of learning and knowledge in his later life. Further impetus to his growth was provided by his coming under the tutelage of the Master, Sri Ramakrishna. As the head of the South

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Indian Branch of the Mission, he gave shelter and guidance to innumerable devotees in their spiritual problems, in later life.

If one were to measure 'Shashi', with 'Naren' as the yardstick, in his intellectual calibre and brilliance, Shashi would not be found a whit less. He was well versed in three other classical languages in addition to his own mother-tongue Bengali, viz. Sanskrit, Persian and English. As a young undergraduate he came under the moral and spiritual influence of the great Keshab Chandra Sen, the founder of the Brahmo Samaj, who exercised a magnetic influence on the young and old in Calcutta and later in the rest of India, of the time. Keshab Chandra Sen's love and respect for the philosophy of India and his efforts to put it across to the rising generation of the country, found expression in his brilliant conception and eloquence, to popularise the basic teachings of Hinduism in his Brahmo Samaj Movement, to which he could attract adherents throughout India. As the world knows Keshab set his face against meaningless, time worn rituals, orthodoxies, and superstitions that had gathered round Hinduism. Shashi, coming under Keshab Chandra's influence, seemed to change from the orthodoxies learnt from his parents at an earlier age. He gave up, for a time at least, the usual daily rituals and ceremonials. Enthusiasm and thirst for the real spiritual life grew in him after he listened to the forceful lectures of the Brahmo leader and this contact only whetted his desire to dive deeper into the spiritual realm. At this time Keshab who had visited Sri Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar was writing in glowing terms about Sri Ramakrishna in his journal the *Indian Mirror*.

Coming to know of Sri Ramakrishna, Shashi paid a personal visit to the great saint at Dakshineswar, together with his cousin, Sarat, later known as Swami Saradananda. This first visit was mutually agreeable in that Sri Ramakrishna with his divine intuition was able to recognise and gauge the spiritual potential latent in his visitors at the very first sight. Immediately he saw them (Shashi and Sarat) he seemed to like them. Simplicity was the keynote of Sri Ramakrishna's life throughout, hence the first characteristic question he put to the boys was 'What do you believe, Brahman with form or without form?' And he was delighted with Shashi's prompt, frank and guileless reply, 'When I don't know that there is a God (Brahman), how can I answer your question either way?'. This first meeting of the two boys with the Master, evoked a warm response from him. The Master realised the different levels of their spiritual *samskaras* (tendencies), requiring different methods of tackling and as such invited them to visit him more frequently but separately.

Shashi became greatly drawn to the Master after this first memorable meeting, he went to Dakshineswar very often to spend long periods, talking about God, religion and related spiritual subjects. The burden of the Master's teaching repeated and reiterated in so many different ways was :

> 'God is, and exists; it is possible to feel His presence; it (this intrinsic feeling) itself is its evidence (pramana); there are living, (even now) persons who have, in their own lives seen God and satisfied themselves as to His existence; many in the past have realised God to leave behind them definite experiences; to realise God should be the prime aim of our life, but to do this the mind should be cleansed of all impurities. Acquiring this knowledge (realisation of God) is unlike acquiring worldly knowledge. You should have implicit faith and devotion. An earnest and sincere attempt should be made towards detachment from worldly possession; and an intellect for clear understanding and discrimination has to be cultivated. Mere logic, reasoning and book-knowledge of the world's scriptures, are not enough. You have to devote a great deal of your time to concentration and meditation on God before you can hope to progress.'

It is not only these heart-felt sermons of the Master that affected the disciples, but the corresponding practices and disciplines in the personal life of the Great Teacher that wrought the revolution in the personality and character of the young devotees like Shashi. One and all of them were visibly moved by the Master's unique detachment from worldly matters, his

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intense faith in and devotion to his Ishta Devata (chosen deity) the Goddess Kali, and his frequent trances. All these had their place in Shashi's love and longing to serve the Master as the personal representative of God on earth. From now on, service of Sri Ramakrishna became his ruling passion, as he realised that in it alone lay his salvation. His subsequent relation with the Master could be aptly compared to the devotion of Hanuman to Sri Ramachandra.

All sorts of people came to Sri Ramakrishna with a variety of personal problems for solution. Some came to be blessed with happiness, others with wealth, fame etc., and only a few for spiritual guidance. But Shashi did not want any of these things. His ruling passion was to be allowed to serve Sri Ramakrishna, as he believed that his life will be blessed and his life's purpose fulfilled in the Master's service.

With frequent visits to the Master at Dakshineswar, some of which extended to several days at a time, Shashi's college studies naturally suffered. He seemed to be indifferent towards them. But he was a lover of literature especially Persian Poetry. He would be poring over it when he found time in the intervals of the Master's service. Once he was found so absorbed in reading, that he forgot to perform a certain bidding of the Master. Sri Ramakrishna had to call him thrice, each time louder than before, till he could be roused from his concentration on the book he was reading. The Master mildly admonishing him said,

> 'If on account of reading books, you neglect your duty, then you will lose what devotion you have towards God.'

Shashi pondered over these words of the Master and concluded that by reading exotic literature he would lose what bhakti he had gained, and forthwith threw all his books into the Ganga.

Shashi was a student in the B.A. class, when Sri Ramakrishna was laid up with fever for several days. The Master had to be moved to Shyampukur for treatment. Shashi left his house and studies in order to serve Sri Ramakrishna. The other disciples of the Master were also devoted and eager to serve the Master but the outstanding quality of Shashi was the priority he gave to the service of the Master even above that of his own personal salvation. He believed sincerely and intensely that the Master was God incarnate, and serving him was all-inclusive worship and his first and last duty.

From now on, devotion and service to the Master, became his one all-consuming passion. In a nearby temple there happened to be a great celebration of the car festival, at the time of Sri Ramakrishna's illness. All the disciples except Shashi left the bedside of the Master for variable periods to attend it but this privilege he did not exercise to absent himself from the Master's bedside for long. He returned very soon without waiting to watch the gay procession. Even going there his thoughts were about the Master. He brought back from the fair a pen-knife and two fresh lemons to present Sri Ramakrishna. The Master was evidently pleased as he remarked to Shashi,

> 'Yours is the true devotion. You have done a very good deed in buying these presents. At the fair the poor from the surrounding villages assemble to sell the produce of their simple industry and labour; cheap trinkets, toys and other wares to earn a few coppers. The simple hard-working villagers will be happy if people buy their handiwork and the creations of their artistic labour. That is why one should not return empty-handed from a fair.'

The intensity of love between the Master and Shashi was of the same degree, mutual and reciprocal. The latter was inseparable from the former except for brief periods of attending personal calls for bath, food etc. One bitterly cold wintry night, Shashi had gone out without any sort of covering on his body. Sri Ramakrishna noticed it after he had gone out. Though disabled by his own illness he got out of the bed and with the help of a walking stick, started rummaging about for a shawl to take to his beloved Shashi but

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Shashi returned soon. Seeing him shivering with cold Sri Ramakrishna said :

'You went out in the bitter cold without any wrap and I felt the chill, so I was searching for a shawl for you.'

In spite of the best nursing by the beloved and loyal disciples and the best medical treatment by the physicians of Calcutta, Master's illness went from bad to worse and on August 15, 1886 the Master left his mortal coil.

To the disciples who had gathered round the Master to serve and nurse, life became empty, aimless and dark. One by one in sadness and despair they went back to their homes at the importunities of their parents. Some went on pilgrimage. The few who remained behind decided to live together in a place practising spiritual disciplines instead of roaming about aimlessly. An old haunted house at Baranagore was rented for the purpose. Slowly the other young disciples who had gone home temporarily joined the monastery. Shashi took upon himself the worship of the Master. The relics of the Master were preserved in a special room, which formed the shrine. A portrait of the Master was installed on a raised pedestal. Towards the end of May 1887 the young disciples led by Narendranath took the formal vow of Sannyasa. Shashi was named as Swami Ramakrishnananda, one who had his bliss in Sri Ramakrishna, as a fitting tribute for the intensity of his devotion and service to the Master.

Swami Ramakrishnananda worshipped the portrait of the Master with the same sincerity and devotion with which he was serving the Master when alive. Swami Vivekananda was not for elaborate worship of the Master at that time since there was no regular source of income to ensure continuity of elaborate worship. But Swami Ramakrishnananda set all his doubts at rest when he said :

'Whatever happens I will serve and worship Him. I shall collect all the necessities of worship. None of you need worry over it, and none of us need be obliged to anyone for this observance. You carry on your spiritual practices and meditations in your own way ; this responsibility of daily worship shall be mine, and with the food so offered I will serve you all.'

Swami Ramakrishnananda worked as a teacher in a nearby school in order to meet the expenses for the Master's service but as the income was not enough to maintain the brotherhood, sometimes food was begged from door to door. Swami Ramakrishnananda himself cooked the food, offered it to Sri Ramakrishna and re-distributed it as prasad to all the other brother-disciples who spent most of their time in meditation. Like a mother he would drag them from their meditation and feed them. Thus with bonds of love, he united them all. He was the main prop of the institution—this nucleus Math, of the now world-wide Ramakrishna Mission. But for him it is possible that the disciples of the Master would have wandered away and lived their lives unknown to the world. One by one the brother disciples caught in the charm of the wandering life of sannyasa went away and visited many places of pilgrimage, but Swami Ramakrishnananda stuck to his post of duty, to his Gurudev. Like a watch-dog he kept vigil over the relics of the Master, and considered no place on earth, as sacred and holy as the little shrine where the Master was installed.

He, however, was obliged to leave Calcutta and part from the Paramahamsa's holy relics at the behest of Swami Vivekananda in 1897. Swami Vivekananda on his return from his triumphant tour of the West—carving for himself and Hinduism an exalted place in the estimation of the philosophers and thinkers of the New World—via Colombo and Madras, gave inspiring talks to audiences in ever increasing numbers. Devotees at Madras requested the Swami to send some one of his brother disciples to start a centre in Madras for the propagation of Sri Ramakrishna's Gospel. In reply to this demand he had replied,

'I shall send you one who is more orthodox than your most orthodox men of the South and who is at the same time unique and unsurpassed in meditation and worship of God.'

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He had in his mind Swami Ramakrishnananda at that time. Swami Ramakrishnananda believed Swami Vivekananda as the direct mouthpiece of their Gurudev, so when Swami Vivekananda asked him to go to Madras for starting a Math there, he readily acceded to his request, though it meant painful separation for him from the Master's relics and their worship to which he was so long attached. He only took the Master's photograph in the familiar pose of divine beatitude, and sailed to Madras.

With great enthusiasm and devotion Swami Ramakrishnananda was welcomed in Madras, by a few well-wishers and admirers of Swami Vivekananda. It was arranged to accommodate the Swami at the 'Ice House', facing the Madras beach. His concern here as at Baranagore and Alambazar Maths was the service of the Master and as enjoined by the leader Swami Vivekananda his other duty was to broadcast the message of Hinduism as verified in the life of the Master. That to Ramakrishnananda the picture of the Master was not a mere likeness but the Master himself was proved by the way in which he conducted his worship. On sultry Madras nights he would open the shrine and go on fanning the picture of Sri Ramakrishna for hours; similarly when from the leaking roof rain water began to drip into the room he would hold an umbrella over the picture for the rest of the night; and did not disturb or shift the position of the picture lest the sleep of the Master should be disturbed. Many are such instances in the life of the great Swami.

Swami Ramakrishnananda was not by temperament and nature, cut out for oratory like his twin disciple Swami Vivekananda. But he had the same clear intellect and vision, learning and wisdom, the broad and generous spiritual outlook, which became evident in his quiet talks with the increasing number of his audiences in the cities of the Madras Province. His austere, simple and above all religious life made a great and indelible impression on the people and attracted a large following for the Ramakrishna Movement throughout South India. His discourses were brief and to the point. His sincerity coupled with an extraordinary intellectual grasp of the subject of his talks, made a profound and lasting impression on his listeners. In the simplest language and the fewest possible words, he was known to deliver the high philosophical concepts of the Vedanta so that even ordinary persons could easily understand. Only meaningful and appropriate words came out of his mouth, with nothing flamboyant or flashy in his style. Once led to compare politics with religion he said 'politics is freedom of the senses, while religion is freedom from the senses'. Again, comparing *Dvaita* (dualism) with *Advaita* (monism) he remarked:

> 'In the dualistic method, enjoyment is the ideal; in the monistic method freedom is the ideal. By the first the lover gets the beloved at last and by the second the slave becomes the master. Both are sublime. One has no need to go from one ideal to the other.'

Ramakrishnananda had his own belief rooted in Advaita, even so, he had great respect and regard for the ideologies of *Dvaita* and *Vishishtadvaita*. For Ramanuja, the apostle of the latter system, he came to have equal admiration as that to Sankara, the apostle of *Advaita*. He even wrote in Bengali, a detailed biographical work on Ramanuja.*

When he came to weigh the claims of science over religion, in its modern context, he would say:

> 'Science seeks for Truth in the material, external world, while religion seeks to reveal Truth in the inner spiritual world. Both have their importance. But pursuit of pure science, eternally eludes the successful end, and fails in its objective, while religion honestly and sincerely pursued leads invariably to success. This is the essential difference. Truth should be realised in our own spiritual Self, and not in the outer world. Where science ends, religion begins.'

Morality and ethical conduct, (*Dharma* and *Niti*) he would define as:

> 'That which makes us unselfish and takes us to the feet of God is morality, (including both

* The book in English translation is now available with Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras.—(*Ed.*)

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Dharma and Niti) ; while the opposites selfishness and hypocrisy in our dealings with the world, takes us further away from the Lord and that is immorality.'

Swami Ramakrishnananda was a true Hindu in respect of his reactions to the other faiths like Christianity, Islam etc., broad-minded and generous ; and held that they too in their own way pointed to the same Truth, we all call God. He was well read in the Bible and the Koran. Whenever he had to pass in front of St. Thomas Church in Madras, he was seen to enter it and offer brief prayers and come out to continue his walk. On a Good Friday (Easter) he once gave a public lecture at which many devout Christians were invited. He talked at length on the philosophic Truths behind the Christian Gospels, as easily and simply as he did on the Hindu religious ideals and philosophy. His Christian listeners were amazed at the profundity of his knowledge of their own religion. On another occaison, a party of Muslim boys who had taken shelter in the precincts of the Ashrama in Madras from heavy rains listened to the Swamiji's illuminating talk on the philosophic ideas and ideals of the Koran. The boys were so deeply impressed with the exposition and erudition of the Swamiji, that they returned every evening for a week to hear the Swamiji discuss about it.

Swami Ramakrishnananda's life in the early stages in Madras was by no means easy. His daily routine included the elaborate rituals and worship at the shrine of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, the frequent outings to give educative discourses on the glorious Hindu tradition, and attending to the day-to-day affairs of the Ashrama including cooking the food for offering.

It is no doubt true that the 'lion's-roar' of Swami Vivekananda's eloquence had roused the people of Madras to the glorious heritage of the religious and philosophic tradition of Hinduism, but by the time Swami Ramakrishnananda could go over to Madras, this enthusiasm had almost died out. With no comparable magnetism of his twin spiritual brother Swami Vivekananda, the initial effect of Ramakrishnananda's work in Madras could not be described as a resounding success, but his character and personality soon began to register its stamp on the imagination of the thinking section of the people of Madras. They came forward to help him in cash and kind for the maintenance of the Math. There were occasions, in those early days, when there was nothing to offer to the Master. On one such occasion, he was heard to say, addressing the picture of the Master in the shrine,

'I won't go and beg henceforwards. If anything comes unasked I shall offer it to you and take the prasad ; otherwise I will bring sea sand for offering to you and shall live on that.'

But help always came almost miraculously. On this occasion an unknown devotee of Sri Ramakrishna came and offered a sufficient sum of money to the Math, in gratitude to the Master's granting his prayers for promotion and advancement in his job. Sri Ramakrishnananda's eyes were filled with tears at the thought that the Master in his inscrutable manner sends help when it was most needed. Therefore he said to himself :

'If I have to beg for anything, let me beg earnestly of God, rather than of man to supply the necessities of life.'

Another time, the birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna was approaching. On this occasion feeding the poor formed an important item of the programme, but the resources of the Math at the time were woefully inadequate for the purpose. The night prior to the celebration he spent in ceaseless prayer and strangely the next morning, a large donation came from the Yuvaraja of Mysore. The Yuvaraja who was greatly impressed with the new book of the Swamiji 'The Universe and Man' had contributed the sum as a mark of his appreciation and humble gift to the Swami.

Slowly but surely, Swami Ramakrishnananda's name and fame spread to all the urban places of the Madras province. He was frequently invited to speak at distant places. Although it meant great personal hardship and

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privation, he never refused any invitation. Mysore, Bangalore and even Bombay were visited on invitation to speak and spread the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. He even went to Burma on a lecture tour and spoke on Hinduism and Vedanta. Later many of these addresses were printed in book form and made available to people of the country and the world. That his place as a pioneer of the world-wide Movement, the Ramakrishna Mission, was no less to that of Swami Vivekananda came to be more and more clearly realised. He spent fourteen long years of his valuable and effective life in Madras. The strenuous life in the enervating climate of Madras combined with the lack of nourishing food brought about pulmonary tuberculosis, necessitating in his departure for treatment from Madras to Calcutta. But the fell disease had advanced too far; in spite of the best medical treatment the Swami passed away in Calcutta after ailing for nearly a year. Thus ended the divine life of a great soul (Mahatma).

In retrospect, it can now be established, that the thesis of the Unity of all Faiths, and spread and popularity of the 'Universal Movement' founded on the basis of the teachings and life of the Master, got its further momentum from the lives of Swamis Ramakrishnananda and Vivekananda, though lived in their unique and distinctly different ways. Swami Ramakrishnananda in addition to advancing the thesis of the Universal One-ness and Brotherhood of all faiths, also took upon himself to select the appropriate mantras from the Shastras for the performance of worship of the Master. These mantras are still used in the centres of the Ramakrishna Mission all over the world.

His views on the vexed question of idol worship (profanely called idolatry) could be summed up in his own words :

> 'For the majority worship of idols (Sakara-or Saguna-Brahman) is the way to attain spirituality. Puja or ritual worship, chanting of mantras, decorating the deity (alankara), waving of lights (arati), ringing of bells, all these may seem unimportant and secondary in the ultimate realisation of the Godhead, but this same elaborate and practical ritual (karmangas) certainly creates the climate of devotion and faith, purifying the mind. There is no doubt that such worship develops a spiritual consciousness of greater and greater intensity, so that the devotee eventually arrives at such a state, as to be able to meditate on the Formless Brahman (Nirguna-Brahman or the Unmanifested Absolute) and finally attain Him.'

Swami Ramakrishnananda's was a beautifully blended life of bhakti (devotion), jnana (knowledge) and karma (action). He not only preached the message of essential identity of all faiths as taught by Sri Ramakrishna but practised it in his own life. Swami Vivekananda was no doubt an intellectual giant with a heart which melted with love and devotion, but Swami Ramakrishnananda was a greater saint of devotion and love externally with his inner intellectual strength comparable to Vivekananda's though hidden from the gaze of all but the careful observers.

These two streams of glorious Vedic tradition flowed from the same single source, the feet of Sri Ramakrishna—one the intellectual ideology of Swami Vivekananda and the other, the strongly accented devotional stream of Swami Ramakrishnananda. Devotees who bathe in either stream with faith and devotion benefit equally in enlightenment and knowledge; in their attainment of their spiritual goal—liberation (Mukti). Of this there is no doubt.

Bhakti has been the one constant theme of our sages. Apart from the special writers on Bhakti, such as Shandilya, or Narada, the great commentators on the Vyasa-Sutras, evidently advocates of Knowledge (Jnana), have also something very suggestive to say about Love. Even when the commentator is anxious to explain many, if not all, of the texts so as to make them import a sort of dry knoweldge, the Sutras, in the chapter on worship especially, do not lend themselves to be easily manipulated in that fashion. There is not really so much difference between Knowledge (Jnana) and Love (Bhakti) as people sometimes imagine.

— SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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THE PARAMAHAMSA AND THE PEOPLE

SWAMI CHIDBHAVANANDA

What constitutes Society : There is a way of gauging the strength of a chain. A chain is made of a number of links. It is the weakest among these links that actually represents the strength of the chain. Let it be supposed that a very strong iron chain is used to bind an elephant. While the many links in it are strong, a solitary link happens to be weak. It has then to be concluded that the chain is no stronger than that weak link. The elephant tries his best to free himself and succeeds in snapping the chain. It is that solitary weak link that has rendered the chain weak. We say, 'The chain has given way,' not that a link has given way. The strength of the chain therefore lies in its weakest link.

Society consists of all types of men. A few there are who are very eminent in literary attainments. Some others are wealthy and well placed. Yet others shoulder the administrative burden. A few others choose to defend and protect their country against intrusion and invasion from without. There are again a group of men who have no other concern in life but to do disinterested service to society. Wherefrom have all these risen? The general populace is the source of all these several groups and types. The worth of a society is to be gauged not by the quality of this type or that, but by the stuff of the entire populace. The attainments of the commonalty are the only factor that counts in evaluating a society. A poet may produce literature eulogizing a man of wealth, a benefactor, a scholar, a warrior or a statesman. Readers of that literature tend to estimate society on the basis of that eulogy. An estimate of this sort hardly ever tallies with the truth.

If a true estimate has to be arrived at there are several factors to be taken into consideration. From among the people, groups of various localities should be taken up for observation and study. Their attainments in general knowledge, their proficiency in the three R's, their physical build, their standard of behaviour, the poise in their mind, their application to physical labour, their good neighbourliness, the comeliness of their homestead, their voluntary service to the people in distress, the manner in which they face adversity, the hospitality they extend—these and others are the factors that go to decide the worth of a society. If anything like half of the folk come up to a decent level in these traits it should be a matter for appreciation. A society constituted of such people as these may well be taken to be civilized. The attainments of the generality of the people alone count in the estimating of a society.

It is evident that the condition of our people in general is today anything but laudable. The alarming increase in the population year after year is in itself a matter for concern. A proportionate increase in the combined people-effort is no where to be found. A good many are given to the disease of laziness. They are a prey to several physical ailments. The generality of the people do not even think in terms of ridding themselves of their diseases—mental and physical. The huts they dwell in are more hovels than congenial homes. Live a high life in a humble cottage, has been one of our national ideals. Humble should not be associated with a lack of hygiene. Their choosing to live in dirty habitations is not the sign of simplicity, but the outcome of ignorance. Air in pristine purity and disease-destroying bright sunshine are in abundance in India, thanks to Nature's bounty. But our people shut out these boons from their ill-constructed dwellings. Dirt and rubbish go on accumulating round their holes. Flies happen to be their unfailing companions. Contaminated air covers the area with a foul

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smell. Protecting good drinking water which is a gift of nature is a thing unknown to them. They let it get polluted by dirt and filth. They turn a deaf ear to any instruction given to them regarding a pure and healthy life. They occasionally get into a mood to listen to wholesome instruction. But they do not take the pains to translate it into action. In short the common folk in our land are sunk in poverty and steeped in ignorance. And these are the people who constitute our society. No yield can be expected of a deteriorating and dwarfed plant. Neither can we expect men of calibre and stamina coming out of a stagnant and lethargic society. Our national problem today is to make the people vibrant with life, beaming with knowledge and surging into action.

The Paramahamsa's interest in the world : Even into an emaciated society of such kind came the exalted Paramahamsa. Are we justified in congratulating ourselves on having produced a Paramahamsa from amongst us? Now the question is what connection there can be between the ultra-mundane of the Paramahamsa and the earth-soaked state in which we are. From birth onwards no thought of this world ever crossed the mind of the Paramahamsa. It may truly be said that he just lived in this world, but took no note of it. In keen contrast to this life the attention of the common man is ever directed to eking out a livelihood. All that the masses care for is somehow to drag on with as little effort and toil as possible. If the Paramahamsa's mind rested in the North Pole of spiritual beatitude, that of the common man wallows in the South Pole of want and nothingness. Is it ever possible to bridge the wide gulf between the two? Did the Paramahamsa even think in terms of having anything to do with the earth-bound ever-worried common man? The mud-fish never for a moment thinks about improving its muddy environment. However dirty and loathsome the mud may be the mud fish only busies itself in thriving there happily. People in the world live even as the mud-fish lives in the mud—was the warning of the Paramahamsa to the spiritual aspirant. We have to enquire whether the Paramahamsa, in consonance with his teaching, left the muddy world severely to itself.

As the Paramahasma soared into the spiritual region, thought of his physical existence slipped away from his mind. Many were the occasions when he was not conscious whether his clothes remained on or fell off his body. While he was partaking food the act of eating would very often get suspended, due to his entering into trance. When for months together he was lost in Nirvikalpa Samadhi, nourishment had to be forcibly thrust into his mouth by others. He did not then know whether he ate or ate not. While he was in that state the passersby were never cognized by him. Those who praised him and those who slighted him were equally outside his ken. There was no differentiation in his mind between day and night or between heat and cold. One may be inclined to arrive at the conclusion that there was no connection whatever between the Paramahamsa and the buried mudfish of ordinary men. But the truth was that he paid some attention to this world too.

The greater portion of the Paramahamsa's mind was ever dwelling in regions beyond. Hardly did his mind descend to the earthly level. It was not without strain that he brought it down once in a way. Whenever he came down thus, he desired to associate with people. In fact he prayed to his Chosen Deity, the Cosmic Mother, that he should not altogether forget the people, but that he should have the bliss of mingling with them. A devotee once put it to him that he would escort him to caves on the Himalayas far removed from the woes of the world and congenial to his remaining lost in Brahman. The smart and spontaneous reply that he gave was such as to evoke wonder : 'Abandoning this place abounding in devotees why should I retreat to forest regions, the home of wild animals?' No doubt he loved the entire creation, but he loved man most. There are anchorites who eschew mankind and choose to live amidst the denizens of the woods. But the Parama-

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hamsa's attitude was the other way. He adored all beings, but had a partiality for man. It was a direct realization of his that God alone has become all living beings. But that God in the form of a tiger was to be respected from a safe distance was his exhortation. He laid stress on the fact that God is manifest most in the human. It is thus evident that love of beings also found a place in his God-absorbed mind and that he gave man the foremost place among beings.

Love for the lowly : The Paramahamsa's mind was not given to anything but God-absorption. The bliss he derived was solely from the thought of God. No idea had ever crossed his mind of making a pilgrimage, in the wont of the pious. He was all the same persuaded to do a little at least of it. In response to the request of Mathura Nath Viswas, the founder of the Dakshineswar temple, he agreed to go on a pilgrimage to Banaras and Brindavan. Necessary arrangements for the trip were made in all enthusiasm. Quite a large party started in the pilgrimage with zeal and fervour. The fact that the Paramahamsa was in the company added to the joy. On the way to Banaras a halt was made at Vaidyanath, a Siva shrine, for a few days. While there, the Paramahamsa could not help taking note of the dire poverty of the inhabitants of the place. Many were the people there who had not the wherewithal for a decent meal or the means to procure bare clothing. The Paramahamsa was moved by this sight of suffering. He felt it necessary to bring the situation to the notice of Mathura Nath in these words : 'Here is an opportunity for you to be of some service to the needy. It behoves you to feed well these starving ones even for a day. You will do well also to present each of these with a piece of cloth so that each may cover his nakedness. Please do bring immediate relief to them.' And that large-hearted benefactor was not the man to make the slightest deviation from a wish of the Paramahamsa. But he had not prepared for a large-scale charity of this kind in the course of the pilgrimage. And nothing worth while could be done at such a short notice. And a benevolence on this scale not previously planned for, would seriously inconvenience the pilgrimage. A hint to this effect was thrown by Mathura Nath to his revered master. He felt certain that the Paramahamsa would understand the position if it was clearly presented to him. But the Paramahamsa did not see eye to eye with the leader of the pilgrim party. He behaved rather like a self-willed youngster, he was quite adamant. The traits of an assertive child were evident in him. A child-like behaviour was of course quite common with him. 'If so, all of you may proceed on your pilgrimage to Banaras and Brindavan. I shall but cast my lot among these unfortunate ones. I have not the heart to ignore them and go'—saying this the lover of the lowly went and joined the group of the poor folk seated under a tree. Mathur Nath had no way of escape now. He immediately wired to Calcutta and got a wagon-load of rice, clothes and other necessaries. The poor of the place were sumptuously fed and presented clothes. The Paramahamsa found supreme joy in the joy of the humble folk. The man who was usually lost to the world in the bliss of the Absolute now stood identified with the common folk who were being propitiated. He would think of the pilgrimage only after serving the needy. Ritualistic charity which ordinarily flows to temples and priests was thus directed by the Paramahamsa into the new channel of serving the low and the suffering.

Another incident almost akin to this is recorded in the life of the Paramahamsa. Mathur Nath once took him on a visit to his extensive estates. The dire poverty in which a section of the estate labourers were sunk did not escape the notice of the visiting saint. 'Why have you neglected and driven these people who toil for you, to this pitiable state ?' he interrogated. 'It is humanly impossible to pull up all the impoverished,' was the Zamindar's nonchalant reply. 'Fie on this attitude of yours ! you should not hold yourself the proprietor of this property. All wealth does but belong to the Almighty. Every

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moneyed man should hold himself a steward to the property he is in charge of' — thus did the Paramahamsa admonish the landlord. He insisted on Mathura Nath's providing them with decent dwelling places and other amenities. It may be noted that this Paramahamsa who was usually absorbed in the Absolute would, whenever he descended to this world, attend to it and serve it with devotion like any other dutiful citizen. योग: कर्मसु कौशलम् । Yoga is the very dexterity of work — is a pithy statement in the Bhagavadgitopanishad. This principle is one of the few indispensable corner-stones to the edifice of Vedantic living. A not-uncommon misconception about Vedanta is that it advocates a sacred living to the exclusion of secular concern, and that indifference to the work-a-day world is a mark of spirituality. But the truth is that this philosophy alone exhorts its followers to liquidate little self-centredness and to take to all-inclusive service. The so-called secular can be metamorphosed into the sacred. And in this consists the real dexterity. But the way to do so is not through self-distraction but through self-composure. The more one merges in the spiritual poise within the less need one toil to discharge one's duty to others. A fraction of the Yogi's in-gathered mind serves the world much more efficiently and unfailingly than the entire mind of the worldling vexed with worldly worries. The life of Sri Ramakrishna lost in God-consciousness exemplifies this marvellous truth. It was but a passing thought and attention that he gave to the misery-laden world; but with it what a mighty change he has wrought in converting self-seeking man into a servant of God-in-man!

The Paramahamsa's alter-ego : To understand the Paramahamsa in entirety it will not do to cull him out and study him individually. He and his chief apostle, the Swami Vivekananda, form inseparable twin personalities. As a coin has its obverse and reverse, these two personalities embody two phases of spiritual life. The Paramahamsa represents the creative force and the disciple the distributive. Having been entrusted by his Master with a great mission the disciple religiously trod the length and breadth of this ancient land. He was received in palaces as well as in humble huts. He contacted all from princes down to peasants. Seated on the last sea-girt rock at the Cape he visualised the India of the present and of the past. Not spiritual transcendence, but the thought of the common man then gained supremacy in his mind. Concern for the teaming millions wallowing in ignorance and poverty obsessed him. This man who once preferred, in the presence of the Paramahamsa, to be lost in the Absolute, now gave absorbing attention to the service of the common man. That there is no redemption for this holy land unless the lot of the common man is improved was the thought which possessed his whole being. The ever-patient common man in India quietly puts up with hunger, ungrudgingly reconciles himself to the travails in life, unreservedly toils for the food of others. Neglect of such an innocent is the root cause of the degradation that had come upon this land. Thus was the Swami pondering, seated at the foot of Mother India : He was convinced that there is no redemption for the nation except through the redemption of the common man. He resolved to devote the rest of his life to the service of the people. A band of students in Madras had the privilege of discovering this great Swami. Spontaneously they arrived at the decision that here was a man worthy of representing Hinduism at the Parliament of Religions about to meet then in Chicago in America. They hastened with their preparations to make him grace the Parliament with his participation. But then the Swami struck a different note; he spent all the money they had collected, on feeding the poor on the seashore of Madras. The enthusiastic young men however stuck to their original decision, again collected the required money and saw to it that the Swami was sent over to America. It was not however the Parliament of Religions that lured the Swami to that distant land, but the thought of finding in America ways and means to serve the poor and distressed in the homeland. Events so

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developed that he became the hero of the Parliament — as if it had all been planned by Providence. Homage and hospitality befitting a monarch was offered to him. An ordinary man would have been easily swept off his feet by such a reception, but the mettle of which the Swami was made was different. With sobbing eyes and a throbbing heart he contrasted the dire poverty in India with the rolling luxury of America. Why there was this inequality in the design of the Maker — was the thought that vexed him. While on one side his spiritual mission in the West was striking root, his ceaseless thought on the other was somehow to raise the lot of the common man in India. In his plan of work for the rejuvenation of India, elevation of the masses occupied the first and foremost place. Thus we see that the alter-ego of the Paramahamsa pants for and plans the service of the people. 'The poor and the down-trodden are the God I worship' — he averred and he untiringly acted on it. Though physically he is now not with us his plan of work goes on ceaselessly.

The enlightened do their duty to society : A wrong notion prevails in our land in regard to spiritual pursuits. That if an individual gives himself over to the search of the Divine, worldly obligations automatically terminate for him is the notion. To Dakshineswar, the spiritual arena of the Paramahamsa, once came a pseudo-vedantin, Hazra by name. He held himself to be a highly evolved spiritual man. He was in fact very attentive to the acquisition and preservation of things earthly. This man did not however escape the keen eye of the Paramahamsa. Several were the occasions when the Paramahamsa severely reprimanded the self-styled anchorite in these words : 'You have your wife and children, and an aged mother, to boot. You have not properly provided for them all. Abandoning them to starvation you pose yourself as a spiritual man and are all earnestness in providing exclusively for yourself. You are not, as you pose to be, indifferent to luxury. This sort of irresponsibility ill becomes any decent man. The first charge on you is the maintenance of your dependents. Know that you shall have neither the here nor the hereafter by posing to be, what you are not, a holy man and by neglecting those who have no other support.' Such were the observations he made to the callous pretender.

And to those who came to him as disciples and followers, the Paramahamsa taught that one should discharge all worldly duties scrupulously. He emphasised that the married people have quite a number of worldly duties to perform. To earn money by honest means is one's first duty. To support dependents is incumbent on one. Such discharge of duty may be equated with the worship of the Divine. On the plea of devotion to God no one shall be negligent of worldly duties. He who cannot serve his kith and kin can in no wise serve God. He who is incapable of discharging the simple earthly duties which fall to his lot can by no means serve the Lord. The Paramahamsa drove home this principle to all the men of the world.

Both the Paramahamsa and his chief apostle have laid emphasis on service to humanity. There is a possibility of such service being viewed as encouraging indolence and dependence. The motive however behind such service is not to spread the disease of looking to others for help. A beggarly attitude is not the way to self-reliance and self-uplift. Everyone has to be induced to be active and industrious in his own way. One is bound to earn one's livelihood, and should never be a burden on others. The greatest help of the Enlightened to the commoner is to teach him self help. Thus through their service they draw out the true individuality in the commoner. To the enlightened, inducing self-help and self-reliance in one is as sacred as worship of the Divine. The sages that hail on earth are as a rule spontaneous benefactors to men on earth, rousing in each self-confidence leading to self-renovation. The common man in modern India has stood in need of being awakened to action and self-help. And the Paramahamsa served him according to this need of the time. This Prophet's ever-increas-

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ing retinue continue to discharge this mission of his to the people with all religious zeal. It is thus the God-absorbed that are of the greatest utility to the earth-bound.

लोकस्योपकारार्थं च। 'For the good of all' is the exhortation in the Paramahamsopanishat. This Paramahamsa's life highlights this fact.

MULTI PATTERN MOSAIC IN THE 18 FACET GITA JEWEL

V. B. ATHAVALE

In my article in the *Vedanta Kesari* (April '61), I have shown that Maharshi Vyāsa has taken 70 quotations in the Gita from the earlier vedic literature, and he has extolled Krishna Vasudev as an incarnation of Vishnu, who is praised in *31 rigveda hymns by 4 different rishis for his 3-fold valour (trivikramah) in maintaining 'dharma' (*Atodharmāṇi dhārayan, Vishnoh karmāṇi*). In G.11.24 and 30 Krishna is addressed as 'Vishno'. In G. 10. 21, Vishnu, the son of Aditi, is referred to as the most ancient 'vibhuti'. It is for this reason that G. 18. 70 calls the whole dialogue '*dharmyam samvādam imam*', and G. 11. 1 and 18. 63 call it '*adhyātma samjnitam guhyatamam jnanam*'.

Now we shall see how this 'Adhyatmajnana' is exhibited in various patterns in the 18 chapters. The figure 18 has unique peculiarities, which are of great significance in the modern atomic chemical structure. 'It is known that the period system of elements can be arranged in a cylindrical band, showing periods of 2, 8, 18.' The 18 chapters can be arranged into equal groups of 9, 6, 3 or 2.

Let us take the 1st group 9+9. The central theme of the 9th is to assure that all men or women (even vaishyas and shudras) in this 'anitya', 'asukha' and 'martya loka' can attain 'parama gati' if they take refuge in me, (Atman) (9. 34.). The 18th also, refers to the 4 'varnas' and the verse 65 is merely a repetition of the last verse of the 9th.

If we take the asymmetrical group 8+8+2, we shall have to take 7 and 8 together, as well as 15 and 16. The 7 questions discussed in the 8th are ingeniously introduced at the end of the 7th. It is interesting to note here that the technical words 'dwaita and adwaita', which have become so common in the discussions of the Vedanta philosophy, are absent in the Gita. The parallel words in Gita are, 'dwandwa' and 'nirdwandwa'. But we cannot equate 'dwandwa' with 'dwaita' and 'nirdwandwa' with 'adwaita'. For, G. 15. 5 uses the plural of 'dwandwa' and we find 27 different 'dwandwa' enumerated in the Gita. The plural of 'dwaita' is never used. 'Nirdwandwa' state can exist in spite of many 'dwandwas' continuing to exist. But the 'adwaita' and 'dwaita' cannot co-exist, because they are contradictory terms.

G. 7. 27 introduces the word 'dwandwamoha' and it says that this 'moha' arises out of 'iccha'-'dwesha' (likes and dislikes). G. 2. 14 says that the 5 senses of perception work on the common mechanical contrivance of contact (touch), which may be 'mridu'-'tikshna' (soft-hard) or 'shita'-'ushna' (cold-hot). The reaction of the 'indriya' (organ) may be 'sukha'-'duhkha' (pleasure-pain). It is interesting to note that the word 'kha' indicates either the group of 5 sensory organs or the sky. The prefix 'su' or 'duh' indicate the reaction of the contact with the external objects. The 5 motor organs are named separately as 'karmendriyani' in G. 3. 6-7. G. 3. 34 tells that when these 'su' and

* 17 rcs are by Dirghatama, 7 by Vasistha, 6 by Medhatithi and one by Vasu Atreya.

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'duh' natural reactions reach the brain (mind), they are called 'rāga' (attachment) 'dwesha' (hate). It means that this dual perception of pleasure and pain cannot become 'dwandwa-moha', unless it reaches the mind in the brain. It is also known that during deep sleep or meditation, mind recedes from the brain into the heart and the mind is no more affected by this dwandwa-moha. G. 2. 14-15 maintain that by practice (titiksha) one can get rid of these troubles. It is a well known fact that when people are required to work in factories, where the constant grinding of machines is going on, they feel the worry of the sound for some days, but when they get accustomed to it, they are no more worried by the sounds.

The words 'dwandwa-moha' (getting entangled by the dual aspect) and 'nirdwandwa' (to remain aloof from it) form the central pivot round which the whole of the 'adhyatma-jnana-shastra' in Gita is made to rotate. It is thus necessary to trace the source from which Vyasa has borrowed them. The word 'adhyatma' is borrowed from Kena 1. 30,

'atha adhyatmam, yad etat gacchativa cha manah, anena
cha samsmarati abhikshanam samkalpah
Tasya esha adeshah, yadetat vidyuto vyadyutada 3 ititi nyamishada 3 ityadhi daiwatam.'

Katha. 1. 2. 12,

'tam durdarsham gudham anu-pravishtam guhahitam gavhareshtham puranam
adhyatma yogabhigamena devam matva dhiro harsha shokau jahati.'

The words 'preya' and 'shreya' are from Katha. 1. 2. 1,

'shreyahscha preyascha manushyam etah tau samparitya vivinakti dhirah
shreyo hi dhiro abhipreyaso vrinite, preyo mando yoga-kshemat vrinite
anyat shreyah anyat uta eva preyah, te ubhe nanartham purusham sinitah
tayoh shreya adadanasya sadhuh bhavati hiyate arthat ya u preyo vrinite.'

The word 'shreya' is directly used many times in the Gita, as we shall see later. The word 'preya' is not directly used, but its meaning is included in the technical word 'dwandwa' or 'sukha-duhkha' perceptions of the 5 senses. G. 18. 38 defines these perception of the senses as 'rajasa' because though they begin with pleasure they end in pain.

Now we shall see how G.7.27 introduces this key word of 'dwandwa-moha' as a preface to the words 'adhyatma', 'adhidaiva', etc. which are to follow in the verses 29-30. Verse 27 says, "The 'bhutas' (created beings) get born again and again on account of this 'dwandwa-moha', which is due to the accumulated impressions of love and hate, acquired during the life time. When this accumulated sin gets washed by meritorious act, then only one can be free from this 'moha' and attain devotion towards me. This unflinching devotion towards me makes them free from all future births and deaths. They begin to understand what is 'brahman', 'adhyatma', 'adhidaiva', etc. and finally at the time of death, they know and merge in me."

The central theme of the 15 and 16th, is also to indicate that 'adhyatma-jnana' alone has got the capacity to eradicate completely the 'dwandwa-moha' and thus lead to 'paramagati' from which there is no return. G. 15. 5 says, "without pride and delusion, victorious over the vice of attachment, dwelling constantly in 'adhyatma-jnana', desires pacified, liberated from the pairs of opposites known as pleasure and pain, they tread undeluded, that indestructible path." The verses 19 and 20 give the exact meaning of this 'adhyatma-jnana' and why it is called 'guhyatama shastra'. "He, who undeluded, knows me as the supreme spirit, he understands every thing and he worships me with his whole being. I have expounded this most sacred shastra, by knowing which one can become 'krita-kritya' (completely self satisfied)."

In the last 4 verses (21-24) of Ch. 16, this 'dwandwa-moha' is depicted as the triple gate (lust, wrath and greed) leading to ruin and the man is advised to follow the instruc-

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tions of the 'shastra' given in the earlier chapter, so as to avoid the confusion about deeds and misdeeds.

Though the whole of the Gita dialogue is styled as a discussion about 'dharma' (religion), yet the rules of behaviour laid down in the 15 chapters, are not called the 'vidhis' (rules) of 'Dharma shastra'. On the other hand, they are called the rules of 'adhyatma shastra'. It will be clear from this, that Maharshi Vyasa makes some intrinsic difference between the knowledge of 'dharma' and the knowledge of 'adhyatma'. The words 'dharma' and 'adharma' are associated with 'pāpa' and 'puṇya' and these are again associated with 'satva', 'raja', 'tama', 'gunas' and 'bhavas'. Ch. 7th has introduced and defined all these words and indicated their relation with 'adhyatma-jnana'.

We have already seen that the word 'kha' indicated the 5 senses of perception (ear, eye, touch, tongue, nose) taken together. It is a quotation from Katha. 2. 4. 1,

'Paranchi khani vyatrinat swayambhuh,
tasmāt parāng pashyati na antarātman
kaschit dhirah pratyag atmānam aicchat,
avritta chakshuh amritatvam icchan.'

Normally, the senses of a man are turned outside and hence they can perceive outside things. They cannot see inside. But a steadfast (dhirah) can turn them backward and reach the 'atman'. G. 5. 22, says, the delights arising in the senses by external contact are in reality pains only because they are to end. Hence the wise never rejoice in them. G. 5. 21 says, He who can detach himself from these external contacts and find the internal joy in the Self, is called 'brahma-yoga-yuktātmā'.

(to be continued)

ALAMBAZAR MATH

And the Inception of the Vow of Service

(Continued from the previous issue)

SWAMI AKHANDANANDA

Justice Sir Ashutosh Mukhopadhyay

It was possibly in the year 1915 that on the expiry of the term of Sir Debaprasad Sarbadhikari, Ashu Babu for a second time took upon himself the onerous duties of Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University. Immediately after that he heard from his friend, Sri Hiralal Bandyopadhyay of Bhavanipur, of my former talk with him and invited me to see him. When with Hiralal Babu I came to his house on Russa Road he was still out on his morning walk. As I came to his sitting room on the second floor his sons Ramaprasad and Syamaprasad lay prostrate before me as they learnt from Hiralal Babu who I was. The sight of the robust modest boys gave me much joy.

After I had waited for some time, there came in from the inner part of the house Ashu Babu, bare-bodied, with a perfectly white thick sacred thread hanging from the shoulders. 'What news,' said he and took his usual seat. I reminded him of our short conversation at the Library of the Asiatic Society some twenty years back. He had then expressed his opinion, 'There can be no prosperity for this country within a hundred years.' By way of admiring him I said, 'Nobody can fail to admit that as Vice-Chancellor you have brought about an educational reform in the country by establishing the Post-Graduate Institute and introducing Bengali as a subject for University examinations.' On hearing this Ashu Babu began laughing.

Then he took up a brief of a case in the

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High Court. 'Just see, I can have no rest even at home,' said he. We had no further talk that day. Ashu Babu requested me to come again.

The second time I went to him with a letter from his class-mate, Sri Kali Krishna Bandyopadhyay, pleader of Berhampore. He was still out on his walk in the maidan. As there was still time for his return I began seeing the books in the almirahs in his drawing room downstairs. The almirahs were full of good books like Charles Dickens' works, of three or four editions and of various sizes. After seeing his library downstairs as I sat for some time Ashu Babu came back, a loose-fitting china coat on and with an ordinary stick in his hand. With a smiling face he asked me, 'What news?' As I handed Kali Krishna Babu's letter over to him he read it out standing and asked me to come to the second floor. As I went upstairs I saw innumerable books heaped on both sides of the stairs. On each table there was a heap of books. No sooner had I taken my seat in the room on the second floor than Ashu Babu came from the inner part of the house.

In the course of conversation I suggested that he would leave behind an undying glory for himself if he left a public library like the famous Khoda Bux Library of Patna. At this he said smiling, 'My sons would sell the books for their living, do you see.'

Next I suggested that if he introduced Vedic studies in the University as he had done in the case of Bengali literature, it would do immense benefit to Bengal, where people are quite ignorant of the Vedas, and he would attain immortal fame. With eagerness he answered me, 'You have drawn out what is in my inmost heart. But unfortunately no scholar of the Vedas is to be found in India. I contacted the famous judges of Madras and Bombay High Courts but they have also informed me of the dearth of Vedic scholars of merit in their parts of the country. At last I have been compelled to bring from the Punjab the 75 year old Pandit Bhimsena of the Arya Samaj on a salary of Rs. 250 a month and have placed under him some Post Graduate students reading the Vedas. My suggestion to him is that he would adorn (Mandana) and not contradict (Khandana), that is, he would support the views given in the commentaries of Sayana, Mahidhara and others of old. The Government has sanctioned only rupees fifteen thousand on this account. That sum being spent up I have no other resource.' As I named Dr. Rasbihari Ghosh as a possible patron, Ashu Babu said, 'He has no faith in Vedic education. He will patronise Scientific education. So we can expect nothing from him.' At this I was much grieved. 'Is there none in the country under whose patronage Vedic Education may be placed on a solid footing,' I asked. In reply he said, 'The only hope is with Maharaja Manindra Chandra Nandi of Kasimbazar. His means are being drained from all sides, so he cannot be approached. My expectation was that some students would have Vedic education and introduce it in Bengal in their turn, but there is no hope for that.' As I named Bahuvallabh Sastri he said, 'I have already taken him into the University.'

As I learnt of the heart-felt desire of the giant of a scholar, Ashu Babu, to introduce Vedic education in Bengal my regard for him increased. But the fact that even his earnest effort to find out a scholar versed in the Vedas had failed filled my heart with sorrow and depression.

Another day in his drawing room I had acquaintance with Dr Abdulla Sarwardi. Then we came together upto Dhurmatollah in a tram car. On the way Dr Sarwardi said, 'The appearance of your Master and the preaching of Swamiji of the Master's liberal synthesis of all religions has banished from my heart all ideas of distinction between a mosque and a temple, although I am a Mussalman. It is the same God the Mussalmans pray to in the Mosque as the Hindus do in their temple.' He went on in this strain and I felt great regard for him. After this I came to his house at Kapalli-tollah one day and

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heard from his lips some 'Shers' (verses) from Dewan-e-Hafez.

Concourse of visitors at Alambazar Math

At that time there used to come to Alambazar Math Pandit Panchanan Tarkaratna, Sri Bahuvallabh Sastri, the editor of the famous periodical *Sofia* of Sindh and others to meet us.

Nag Mahashay

One day at about 10 a.m. there came to Alambazar Math, Nag Mahashay and his wife with a basket of fazli mangoes. We all got up to honour them and seeing our eagerness to seat him Nag Mahashay was much worried. Uttering 'Hari Bol, Hari Bol' he began pacing from one end of the room to another. His apprehension was that we would touch his feet. After hard persuasion he sat, not on the bed but at a distance on the bare floor. His eyelids did not move and his mind was drawn inward, as is not to be ordinarily seen. I do not remember to have heard from his lips, anything but the name of Hari and topics concerning the Master. Possibly at our importunity the two accepted that day rice Prasadam of the Master.

For long Swami Turiyananda and I had known him. We two then had our daily walk on the Strand Road from Bagahbazar ditch to Kumartuli Ghat. We sat at many places and spent much of our time singing in praise of God, talking on the Master and engaging ourselves in meditation. Nag Mahashay then lived in a very small rented room near Kumartuli Ghat. In our walk we often found him in meditation on the bank of the Ganga beneath some iron steps. The choice of the solitary spot indicated how devout an aspirant he was. At the flow tide his body would be cooled with the holy spray of Ganga waves. At dead of night we stood long to see him absorbed in meditation.

It was Nag Mahashay's first visit to the Master at Kasipur Garden. Even in the presence of the Master he ate up the Prasadam of the Master along with the leaf on which it was served. At this the Master said, 'This is the acme of humility.' In other books already anecdotes about the Master and Nag Mahashay have been narrated.

While the Master was at Kasipur we had our meditation in the space between the pillars on the western side of the Port Commissioner's hanging bridge over the Baghbazar ditch. One night at about 12 the song of a constable under the Port Commissioner's, in Behag Raga (a tune of Indian classical music) so charmed me that I requested the singer to go on with the piece more than once. On coming back to Kasipur garden I repeated a verse or two of the piece before Swamiji. He enjoyed it and asked me to have the whole piece written. Next night at 12 I was glad to find the constable at the self same spot. I noted down the piece as I heard it from him. The song begins with *Durse ayathe saki.*

The meaning of the song in brief is this : (A lover says :) Oh Sakhi (barmaid), from afar have I come hearing good reputation of your grogshop. The sight of your shop fills my heart with repentance, there is wine, there is the bar, there are cups, there are sausages to be taken with wine, but no Saki. I have a mind to set your shop on fire. I find no pleasure in the garden nor in the forest, where shall I go with this wild mind of mine ? Oh absconder, where have you placed your love that you like to have no contact with me ? I want breath, would you not be kind to me ?

In the Persian language there are two kinds of love—*Ishk Hakiki* and *Ishk Majaji.* Love of God is Ishk Hakiki and worldly love is Ishk Majaji. This song relates to Ishk Hakiki.

Another thing and I have done with Nag Mahashay. While at Kasipur Garden we heard that Nag Mahashay had been fasting for two or three days. I knew Nag Mahashay's address, so Swamiji took me with him to go there to feed him. Nag Mahashay's anxiety at our sudden appearance cannot be described in words. As we requested him to break his fast he at once brought some kachuris and jilipis (two Indian sweets). We sat by him and asked him to eat them. But he threw them to us and said he would not eat

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before we ate. In this way we found it a hard job to persuade him to take anything.

Swamiji's younger brother Mahim (Mahendranath) very often walked the whole distance from Simla to Alambazar at noon, sweating all over, to hear stories of my travels. On some days his eagerness compelled me to tell him of my wanderings. These accounts he enjoyed very much, he said.

Service of Sadhus and Mother

Swamiji used to say, 'In this Kali Yuga (Iron Age) the reward of service rendered to Sadhus and one's own mother is obtained readily.' As regards devotion to mother he would cite the examples of Vidyasagar, the famous barrister Umesh Chandra Bandyopadhyay, Gurudas Bandyopadhyay and Doctor Bhagavan Rudra. The barrister Mr. Banerji had his paternal home near that of Swamiji. In those days whoever went to a foreign land lost his caste and was excommunicated by society. When Mr. Banerji had risen to the top in his profession, he would often come home and from outside the room honour his mother by offering handfuls of sovereigns. As a reward of this devotion to his mother he earned more than any other barrister of the High Court. I heard all these from Swamiji himself. Everybody knows of Vidyasagar's and Gurudas Babu's love for their mothers. Doctor Bhagavan Rudra too had a rapid rise due to his love for his mother, but unfortunately he had an early death.

At that time for some days before the Gangasagar Jatra (a fair held at the confluence of the Ganga with the Bay of Bengal on the last day of the Bengali month of Pausha —middle of January), Sadhus of different places would have their temporary camp from Jagannath Ghat to about Prasanna Kumar Tagore's Ghat. I used to visit them. Diverse types of Sadhus were there—their number could not be counted. Some held an arm upward, some lay on points of needles, some were always standing. There were many more. There also came women Sanyasis (Avadhutinis).

The Marwaris of Burra Bazar came with heaps of luchis, vegetable curry and sweets and fed the Sanyasis to their heart's content. The Marwaris did it by turns. When the Sadhus started for the confluence the Marwaris would present each of them with a blanket and also a bowl to those that had none and gave them a free passage in large boats.

As a reward of service rendered to Sadhus, even though with an expectation of return, the merchants who came from Jodhpur, Bikanir, Jaipur and other States with nothing but a bowl and a blanket with them, and started small shops in Calcutta — those poor people of Rajputana living on chapati and pulse, some fifty years back — are now owners of large properties here. The luxurious palaces and pleasure gardens in Calcutta and its suburbs are owned by them.

(To be continued.)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

Prof. K. R. R. Sastry is a retired Principal of Law College, Jaipur.

Swami Budhananda, formerly Editor of the Vedanta Kesari, is now Assistant Minister at the Ramakrishna Vivekananda Center, New York.

The article on Swami Ramakrishnananda is a translation of a lecture delivered in Kannada by Swami Vijnananda of the Ramakrishna Order at the Mangalore Ramakrishna Ashrama. The translation is by Dr. P. G. Gollerkeri, M.D., of Mangalore.

Swami Chidbhavananda is the Head of the Ramakrishna Mission Tapovanam, Tirupparaithurai, Tiruchirapalli Dt.

Prof. V. B. Athavale is from South Satara.

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CAN SCIENCE ALONE DELIVER THE GOODS?

We live in an age of science. Whether we will or not science has come to stay. Whether we like or not we have to imbibe its mode of thinking. There is no doubt that science has done immense good. No body can contradict it. It has given us swift modes of communication, contracting the distance, as it were, between town and town, state and state, country and country. Even the remotest villages have not to suffer long from any calamity. The wireless, the telegraph, immediately flash the news of the distress to the four corners of the country and the world within 24 hours. Helping hands reach the afflicted within the space of a few hours more, by way of air, water and earth. Air transport has made the farthest country our next door neighbour.

It has made life easy. Arable lands need not lie fallow for want of water. Tubes are sunk into the bowels of the earth and the earth is made to yield its resources of water. The mighty turbulent rivers are tamed, harnessed and the once wasted millions of cusecs of water are brought to the fields of the farmer. Thus famines and floods are controlled to a large extent. Look at your own lamp under which you read the evening news, no smoke bothers you, no trimming of wicks or cleaning of globes of its soot and soiling of hands are necessary. Everything is mechanised, everything is made easy, comfortable. It has controlled the spread of disease. It has saved thousands from dire doom. It has given health and wealth. A happy picture indeed. We may be tempted to say that science has delivered the goods.

But let us stay on and turn our eyes to the other side of the enticing picture. Let us not be carried away by the glamour of science. Let us weigh its pros and cons and decide whether we should sell ourselves wholesale or keep something of ourselves.

Let us begin with the latest discoveries in science, and then travel back. We have now the rockets firing tons of material and men hundreds of miles into space. We are ready to conquer and colonise moon or mars soon but what has it done to the world as a whole? It has divided it into two warring camps each striving to get the better of the other. No one shares the secret with the other. This has led to fear and arms race. Nuclear weapons are being piled by every country, ballistic intercontinental missiles travelling at supersonic speed, capable of dealing death to innocent people before they can be alerted, are getting ready. Yet all this is done in secret, by both the camps. The result is a war of nerves or cold war. Every nation lives in suspicion of the other, in dread of the other. Crores of useful wealth is wasted into the sea of arms race. Man has no peace, he cannot trust his fellow man. The jungle law of survival of the fittest draped in civilised clothes struts in the world. This is about the physical well being.

Now turn to the moral and spiritual side. What type of morality does obtain in the urban places. The factories have changed the moral code wherever they went, which can best be described as bestial or even worse. Man has become a machine and the speed with which he moves leaves him no time to think of morality and spirituality. He has to fulfil his desires without a thought. He has no time for prayer. He moves like a spinning top, what time he gets he requires either for entertainment or for rest. He is like a man with a high fever talking in delirium. His fight for survival gives him no respite to think of the higher values of life. His necessities have increased a hundred fold and so he must earn more and more. He has lost faith in God, so he must make provision for his bad days and for that he must work ceaselessly until he breaks down. His thought is of his own self and then at best of his family; there it ends. Others' considerations are beyond his ken. What wonder then that he becomes self-centred and grabbing. How can children born of such parents be wide in their outlook, they imbibe the qualities from the parents. And how can one expect the nation peopled mostly

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with selfish individuals, greedy for others' wealth to be generous in outlook and sane in judgment. Such a nation looks to its own needs and does not fail to grab with fictitious claims what lawfully belongs to others, its might is its justice. This is all the morality and spirituality we can expect of such nations.

We have taken stock of the situation, weighed the merits and demerits, gain and loss, of the advancement of science. Now would we reject science and go back to the stone age? Not at all. What we would like to suggest is: Science has done good but let us do better. Science has brought the nations closer but one stares the other in the face with strange misgivings and is ready with feline alertness to jump at the other's throat should one get an opportunity. If that were to be so, were it not better that we did not come together at all? But having been cast together how can we reconcile with one another? No power of wealth or power of weapons can do that. We talk of brotherhood of man but it is only lip service or platform talk to dupe the ignorant.

Let us not deceive ourselves, if this idea of brotherhood of man is to be planted firmly in our hearts a common heritage has to be discovered, a common bond which binds one nation to the other like the limbs of a body is to be found out and that can be done not by science, nor by wealth, but by religion alone. We do not mean the religions labelled as such but *the religion*: the fact that we are the children of One God and due to the exigencies of time and place were separated from each other and that the same God who separated us has now brought us together to live in harmony. Every true religion teaches this and those who say that it is not so are trying to exploit the ignorant for their own ulterior ends. Vedanta says that every living being is Brahman. Aye we are all that, not parts but whole. 'I' live in every body, whatever lives and moves is 'my' movement; if I injure any one I injure myself. Nothing exists but 'I', Brahman. Take any one of the two stands and you cannot quarrel, cannot hate, cannot condemn anybody. This is what religion teaches. And unless we incorporate this idea of religion with science there is little hope of survival of this civilisation which is getting intoxicated everyday with its scientific achievements. This only can bring peace to the world and not all the patched up treaties, nor loud assurances of economic stability under one giant or the other. This is not only true in the case of individuals but also of villages, towns, states and countries. And the establishment of everlasting peace is delivering the true goods.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

MESSAGE OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA: Published by Advaita Ashrama, 5, Dehi Entally Road, Calcutta-14. Pages 44. Price 30 nP.

This English booklet is a collection of some of the sayings of Sri Ramakrishna presented in an attractive cover and is priced moderately.

MANIKANA (*A Navya-Nyaya Manual*): Edited with English translation and Notes by Dr E. R. Sree Krishna Sarma. Published by The Adyar Library and Research Centre, Adyar. P. 149. Price not stated.

The *Tattwachintamani* of Gangesa Upadhyaya may be said to have ushered in a new age in the history of Nyaya Philosophy. Gangesa rescued Nyaya from the medley in which it had fallen in company with the Vaisheshika system and with a rare accuracy of thought and terminology restored to it its original distinction of being a *pramana sastra*. Many works followed in its wake either as commentaries on parts or whole or as expositions based upon it. The present work, *Manikana* by an unknown author is one of such treatises. Published for the first time, the text is accompanied by a readable literal translation and helpful notes by Dr Sarma.

In the course of a brief but lucid introduction, the editor makes a necessary observation:

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'Nyaya is not logic in the strict sense of the word. It is a system of philosophy. It is true that it lays stress on inference or reasoning as a means to correct knowledge, but it is not formal. It is not a mere device for correct thinking, but a well-thought-out and complete metaphysical thesis. It sharply divides itself from theological and religious philosophy, though it cannot be said to be in the least atheistic. It seeks to establish the existence of a superhuman Creator through inference and admits the validity of the Vedas on the ground that they were first uttered by Him. Like every other Hindu system of thought, it accepts that the final goal of human life is liberation from bondage. Its various theories and assumptions are so well knit that even if one of its metaphysical tenets were disturbed, it would lose ground as a *pramana-sastra*' (P. XVII). The book is divided into four chapters dealing with Perception, Inference, Comparison and Verbal testimony. To follow the discussions in these pages is a good exercise for the enquiring mind.

M. P. PANDIT

MALAYALAM

SILVER JUBILEE SOUVENIR: Sri Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, Kalady, Kerala. Pages 216.

This souvenir, as it indicates, has been brought out by the Ashrama on the completion of its 25 years of useful existence and service in Kerala. It is a trilingual brochure in English, Malayalam and Sanskrit, major portion of it being devoted to Malayalam. The articles both in prose and poetry on Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Sankara depicting the different aspects of their lives make an interesting and profitable reading. Other educative and informative articles are about Sri Ramakrishna Mission in Kerala, The Ramakrishna Order, its inception and growth, Problems of Higher education, Place of Religion in a secular State, the reminiscences about the Ashrama. Some religious subjects of outstanding importance also find their place in this sumptuous volume. To this is appended a short life sketch of Swami Agamananda, the Founder-President of the Ashrama, who unfortunately passed away just on the eve of the proposed celebrations. Some appreciations of his life and homages to his memory that appeared in the different papers of Kerala are also included.

The brochure profusely illustrated with art plates of Sri Ramakrishna, of his disciples, of the activities of the Ashrama and of prominent visitors is presented on the cover with a panoramic view of the river ghat where Sri Sankara was said to have been caught by the crocodile. We hope it will be received well by the Keralites.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Here are some books published from different places.

East and West Series: Gita Publishing House, 10 C, Connaught Road, Poona-1.

Little Lamps: By T. L. Vaswani. Pp. 38. Price 75 nP.

A Day with Dadaji and *Conversations with Dadaji*: By J. P. Vaswani. Pp. 30, 32. Price 75 nP. 50 nP.

The Sivananda Literature: By Swami Omkarananda. Published by Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy, Sivananda Nagar P.O., Rishikesh, Himalayas. Pp. 612. Price Rs. 20.

Sri Guruvayuresa Aksharamala Stavatrayam (Sanskrit): By Mahamahopadhyaya Vedantakesari Painganad Ganapathy Sastrigal. Published by G. S. S. Iyer & Sons. P. B. No. 315, Madras-2. Pages 10. Price 30 nP.

Sri Sankaracharyula Chidvilasamu (*Telugu*): By Vasudevananda Saraswati, Sankara Math, Bagalore, Hosur Taluq, Salem District. Pages 19.

Gita as I understood it: By Doctor G. Kohli. published by Humanitarian Mission Literature Research Institute, Oriental Chemical Industries, Main Road, Ranchi (Bihar). Pages 30.

The Gita in Practice: By Principal D. S. Sarma. Published by The Gita Samiti, Malakpet, Hyderabad. Pages 18.

Dasavatarastuthih (Sanskrit): of Vadiraja with explanation by Sitaramacharya, Srisoda Vadiraja Math, Udipi. Pages 24.

Gita: (Hindi) Poetic Translation in verse: By Swami Atmananda, Raipur, M. P. Pages 32. — Only upto 12th Chapter.

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Books published by the Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, Delhi-6.

1. *Problems in the third plan*: A critical miscellany. Pages 200. Price Rs. 2.
2. *Laccadive, Minicoy and Amindivi Islands*: Pages 26. Price 50 nP.
3. *Durgapur Steel Project*: Pages 30. Price 40 nP.
4. Civil Aviation in India: Pages 52. Price 75 nP.
5. *Central Excise*: Pages 22. Price 35 nP.

SOME PERIODICALS:

Viveka (Vol. XV): Published by the Vivekananda College, Madras.

Sri Ramakrishna Deepam (March 1961): Published by the Ramakrishna Mission Boy's Schools, Madras. Pages 60.

The Engineering Students' Association Magazine (Vol. XIV): Published by the Ramakrishna Mission Technical Institute, Madras.

NEWS AND REPORTS

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, MORABADI, RANCHI.

The Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama at Morabadi is conducting an outdoor Homeopathic dispensary, a library and reading room. Occasional lectures by eminent speakers are arranged. Magic lantern and cinema shows on religious and cultural subjects are also held in the Ashrama.

Daily worship, and bhajan with Ramanam on Ekadasi days, celebrations of the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda and other prophets form part of its other activities. The ashrama also has arrangements for indoor and outdoor games for local students.

During the year ended March, 1961 the dispensary treated 15,526 patients, and gave free diet to 2,418 needy. The Ashrama distributed milk in 14 villages for 5 months. 100 new garments were also distributed. The Reading Room had an average attendance of 25 and the library lent 512 books. It held 208 indoor and 28 outdoor scriptural classes during the year. The Ashrama depends on public donation. The receipts for the year were Rs. 9,171.35 and the expenses were Rs. 7,894.04.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, KHAR, BOMBAY.

Flood Relief in Kutch, 1959-1960.

On the 14th July, 1959, there were unprecedented heavy showers of rain throughout Kutch, resulting in devastating floods. The Taluks of Bhuj, Mandvi and Abdasa were the worst affected. As a consequence of the terrible rainfall in Kutch, 6,000 houses collapsed, tanks, bridges, roads overflowed in a short time. The Ramakrishna Mission, Bombay took up the relief operations in the afflicted areas immediately. The work including distribution of food and clothing and building of tenements continued upto February, 1960. The total expenditure was Rs. 3,32,625.29 nP. against the total receipts of Rs. 3,51,163.83nP. The Mission has built up a pucca Colony of 70 tenements at a cost of Rs. 1,90,000 just at the outskrits of the City of Bhuj, named Ramakrishna Dham. The Mission conveys their grateful thanks to all donors and volunteers and other organizations specially to 'Bombay Samachar' who helped them in the task.

Flood Relief in Surat, 1959-1961.

On the 16th September, 1959, the whole of the Tapti valley was inundated with Flood waters. Heavy damage and loss to property and loss of men and cattle in Mandvi, Olpad, Kamrej, Bardoli and Chaurashi taluks were suffered. The Ramakrishna Mission sent a relief party to the afflicted area at once. Relief work was done with the help from the 'Bombay Samachar' which opened a Special Flood Relief Fund. After the immediate needs of the people were met, work of a permanent nature in the form of Colonies for Halpatis, Harijan and Middle Class sufferers and a Prayer Hall were constructed, by the help of the Local Government. The total receipts were Rs. 6,58,881.89 and the payments were Rs. 6,37,827.21. The Mission conveys their grateful thanks to all donors and others who helped them in the task.

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, MADRAS
FLOOD RELIEF WORK IN TANJORE

Report of service rendered till 21—7—61

The Mission workers visited about 1,000 affected families in Tirukkattupalli and Thiruvayyar, the worst affected areas in the Tanjore district, wading through breast-deep water in some places. The following new articles have been distributed till 21-7-61 to the affected families : saries 533, dhoties 493, towels 474, children's garments 209, mats 355. More than double the quantity will have to be distributed among the other families already visited. The generous public and friends are earnestly requested to send their kind contribution to the Manager, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras-4, who will acknowledge receipt of the same with thanks.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION FLOOD RELIEF FUND

AN APPEAL

The public are aware of the recent havoc of flood in the whole of South India, particularly in Tamil Nad, that has caused unspeakable physical and economic miseries to a large number of our fellow brothers. In view of the pledge that we all owe to suffering humanity to accord our mite and services towards the mitigation of this kind of unapprehended sorrows, the undersigned appeals on behalf of the Ramakrishna Mission, Madras, to all interested in the welfare of the distressed to send their contribution in cash or in kind to the Manager, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras-4.

Relief work has already been started by the Ramakrishna Mission in Tanjore district, viz., in Tirukkattupalli, Tiruvayyar and the surrounding areas.

As the funds at the disposal of the Mission are very limited at present, we request the benevolent public to rise equal to the occasion and contribute liberally so that the Relief Work may be carried on promptly and successfully to its end.

Madras-4,
Date : 19-7-'61.

SWAMI KAILASHANANDA,
President.

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.... Be bold and face
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease.
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XLVIII SEPTEMBER 1961 No. 5

FROM THE TREE OF DIVINE LORE

Then there arose a Stupa of seven precious substances, five hundred yojanas in height, and stood in the sky, sparkling, decorated with five thousand terraces of flowers, adorned with thousands of arches, hung with thousands of jewel-garlands. Thereupon all beings in all Buddha-fields, human and non-human, beheld the Lord Sakyamuni, the Tathagata, sitting on a throne in the centre of the Stupa and the four classes of audience. At this sight they felt struck with wonder, amazement and rapture.

The Lord spoke: 'Inconceivable is the power to promote the weal of the world, possessed by those who, in their benevolence and compassion, display their miraculous faculties to gladden all living beings, that, gladly excited, they may keep the Sutra also after the extinction of the Sugata.

'Let us suppose, a man has an old house and that, while he is out of doors it is seized by a conflagration and wrapped in a blazing mass of fire. He hears his children inside, engaged in playing and quickly enters to save them.

'But the foolish boys do not mind his words, deluded by their toys.

'Then he says: "Listen, my sons, I have different carts, lofty and great, yoked with deer, goats and bullocks. They are outside the house. Run out all of you and rejoice in them." Hearing of them, all the boys rush out.

'In the same manner, I am the protector and father of all beings who, childlike, are captivated by the pleasures of this triple world. It is as dreadful as that house, inflamed with evils like birth, old age and disease.

'Though I told them of these evils, they would not listen to me because all were ignorant and attached to the pleasures of senses. Then I tell them of the three vehicles, that of the disciples, that of Pratyekabuddhas, that of Bodhisattvas, so show them how to evade the evils of the triple world.

'Meditation, emancipation and self-concentration that is the exalted vehicle in which the sons of the Buddha take never-ending delight. Day and night they sport with this lofty vehicle on the terrace of Enlightenment.'

(Saddharmapundarika)

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SRI KRISHNA AND SPIRITUAL LIFE

न खलु गोपिकानन्दनो भवानखिलदेहिनामन्तरात्मदृक् ।
विखनसार्थितो विश्वगुप्तये सख उदेयिवान् सात्वतां कुले ॥

(O Friend, you are definitely not the son of a Gopi. You are the Witness of the inmost soul (antaratmadrik) of all embodied beings. Who, at the prayer of Brahmā, has descended in the clan of the Satvatas for the protection of the Universe.) —*Gopigita, Bhagawata.* X. 31.4.

Yadyadacarati sreshtah tattadevetaro janāh
Sa yat pramaṇam kurute lokastadanuvartate

—*B. Gita* 3.21

'Whatever a great one does other people also do; that which he accepts as authority the commonalty only follow,' says Sri Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita.* It is the greatest psychological truth ever uttered. In spite of all arguments against imitation we have to admit that ordinary human beings live by copying. Man is an imitative animal. When we begin to admire a person or a society our manners change imperceptibly and unconsciously to conform with that person's or of that society. This is so in every walk of life, whether it is fashion, ethics, politics or religion. Goethe, the German philosopher, voices the same thought when he says,

> 'Men are so constituted that every one undertakes what he sees another successful in, whether he has aptitude for it or not.'

Consequently it is very necessary that our admiration should be properly directed, meaning of success should be properly valued and understood, and the imitation should be wisely but not blindly undertaken.

Each nation has got an ideal of its own and it shines best when it clings fast and lives close up to that ideal. It is like the acting of the *dramatis personae* in a drama; each has a particular role to play. The drama reaches a grand conclusion if each acts his own part well. In this drama of the world India chose to play the religious role and has been doing it successfully through millenniums. It has kept the torch of religion burning and the flag of spirituality flying under favourable, as well as adverse circumstances; it has showed the right path to the errant world time and again; even in the gloomiest hour of its history it produced the brightest lights to dispel the accumulating darkness. And these lights, these personalities became the ideals of our land

On one such occasion when morality and spirituality in the land had sunk to its lowest ebb, when the canker of materialism had eaten into the vitals of the country, when the religiously pious were persecuted, when love existed only for the flesh, when the earth seemed to cry for deliverance from the load of these atrocities and irreligiosities, the Lord incarnated as Krishna. But this time it was an open and direct challenge; Kamsa the unrighteous tyrant was forewarned of his end in every detail. The personality that was to end his life here on earth was to spring from his own kith, his cousin, and as such within his reach. The gauntlet was flung down. It seemed, as if to say, 'Here, I, thy Death, shall be born before you, and within your reach, protect yourself if you can!' Kamsa

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struggled his best to save himself but, was he successful? He killed one by one all the children born to Devaki and in a mad frenzy to rid the world of all possible foes he ordered a massacre of all babes born in his land. Yet as Devaki became pregnant for the eighth time his courage began to dwindle, for it was this eighth child of Devaki that was prophesied, would kill him. He put Devaki and Vasudeva in prison, kept only his trusted men to keep guard over them and arranged to get news of the birth of the child the very moment it was born. But on that appointed day, all his watch, all his sentries and all his precautions fell slack and the baby disappeared from the prison to be replaced by a female child; so perfectly unaware of the exchange of babies were the guards and the nurse, that he was led to believe that the child that lay at Devaki's side was the one that was really born to her. In spite of all the caution, Kamsa's enemy escaped successfully and remained beyond his reach until the day when Kamsa invited his own doom. Kamsa is but a solitary example of the hedonists, in us are concealed miniature Kamsas waiting for the opportunity to manifest themselves. The desire to live a life of pleasure and live it eternally most of us do possess; to satisfy our cravings we rob, cheat, injure and even commit murders; but Kamsa with all his wealth and power did not succeed. His failure should open our eyes to the futility of running after the pleasures of the world and turn our vision to values of a more permanent nature.

Turning our attention to the pious couple, Vasudeva and Devaki, we may wonder why, they who were devoted to God, had to suffer untold miseries? If devotion meant suffering why should we be devoted at all? These questions instinctively crop up in our minds but not in a true devotee's heart. He may in a piqued mood sing like Meera,

> 'If I knew, to love was to invite pain, I would have proclaimed by beat of drum let none love.'[1]

But all the same he is not at all sorry for having undertaken to love God, rather he finds happiness in suffering for His sake. Even in our daily life do we not observe a mother undergoing unheard of tribulations to bring up her children; widowed though she be, she would sell her jewels, her property and even her homestead to make them comfortable, to give them a good education so that they may earn a decent living even when she would be no more with them. A servant who loves his master and hears about the latter's visit to his house gladly toils for days together to accord a proper welcome to the master. A miser, how dearly he hugs his wealth to his bosom and how many sleepless nights he spends worrying over its safety! Do these people consider all these as miseries? No. Why? Because each of them considers that object dearer than other things. Likewise to the devotee the Lord is more dear than all these; he has grasped the true meaning of the Sruti passage,

> 'This Atman is dearer than a son, dearer than wealth, dearer than everything else, and is innermost.'[2]

The Lord is the life of his life and the Soul of his soul and for one glimpse of Him, he is prepared to undergo any ordeal, as the man of the world is for worldly objects. Therefore, though it may seem to the sophisticated that there is no gain in having devotion to

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[1] जो मै जानती प्रेम किये दुःख होय।
नगर डिंडोरा पीटती प्रेम न कीजे कोय॥

[2] तदेतत्प्रेयः पुत्रात्, प्रेयो वित्तात्,
प्रेयो अन्यस्मात्सर्वस्मात्, अन्तरतरं यदयमात्मा॥
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God, and that on the other hand it is fraught with miseries, devotees find joy even in the suffering so undergone and that is what we notice in the case of Vasudeva and Devaki.

Vasudeva, on that terrible night of torrential rains when the whole of Mathura and Gokula was in the grip of unbroken sleep, escaped from the prison, crossed the Jamuna, went over to Gokula with the child that was just born to Devaki, and exchanged it for the child of Yasoda, the wife of his dear friend Nanda. Yet none of them knew about it, so lost were they in the clutches of the delusive power of the Lord, unconsciously lost in sleep. When, however, their sleep broke the child they saw at the bedside of Yasoda, they presumed as her own.

Then began one of the sweetest scenes in the life of Krishna in Gokula. Like the silent creeper which twines ever so softly yet firmly, its tender tendrils around everything it comes in contact, Krishna with his alluring form gathered to himself the hearts of the people of Gokula. The women specially, were never tired of fondling the baby and added to their natural love, the calamities that befell the child endeared him the more to them. Thus attracting the attention of all, the baby grew amidst the simple and innocent cowherds.

At times the extraordinary way in which Krishna came out of the calamities unscathed, created awe and surprise in the minds of the people and the parents, but the mother would always feel anxious for his safety. Time and again the divine power of the child was seen manifested, but just as they were trying to understand it the veil of ignorance would descend on them. Krishna as a child one day ate earth, noticing which his companions reported it to the mother, Yasoda. Yasoda sorely disturbed caught hold of his hand and asked him to open his mouth, but as the child did so she saw instead of earth the whole universe with herself too inside his mouth. Aghast with wonder she ruminated whether what she was seeing was magic or the divine power in the child and just as she was going to discriminate that all this, that was beheld and that was considered as 'I' and 'mine' was transitory, the vision disappeared. The sight of the delightful and helpless looking child drew her once more into the mirage of loving him like a mother. Playing the game of hide and seek in this manner the Lord kept the cup of their happiness full.

'Fortunate were the people of Vraja to have enjoyed the unalloyed bliss of the company of Krishna,' envied the populace of Mathura when Krishna visited Mathura later on. Indeed they were so, and what special merit had they to have obtained such unlimited grace? Guilelessness, says Sri Ramakrishna, is that which makes us very dear and near to God. He himself loved intensely the young and guileless boys who visited him. We see that Krishna too spent his most impressionable age, to put it in popular parlance, with the guileless people. A beautiful instance illustrating this point we come across in the life of Krishna, and it is most impressive because of the contrasting background which it happens to possess.

Once in Vraja Sri Krishna accompanied by his cowherd companions traversed a long distance grazing the cows; the young boys were tired and hungry. The boys who had begun to look up to Krishna to come to their rescue in the times of their need and distress apprised him of their condition and requested him to find relief for their hunger. Krishna saw an ashrama

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of munis not far from where they were resting. He asked the boys to approach the munis and request them for food in his name. The name of Krishna was spread far and wide on account of his wonderful deeds and the people of Vraja considered him as their Saviour, so the boys were sure of getting some food, but when they approached and begged food from the munis in the name of Krishna they were turned away. The munis did not consider Krishna more than an ordinary cowherd. Sadly disillusioned the gopa boys returned and related their experience to him. Krishna smilingly, then sent them to the *munipatnis*. Hearing about Krishna's visit so close to their ashrama the wives of the munis felt immensely happy; gathering a variety of dainty dishes they followed the gopa boys where Krishna, of whom they had heard so much and whom they so eagerly longed to see, was resting. Great was their joy on seeing him, whom they knew to be the Lord incarnate. They would not consent to go to the ashrama again, because all their bonds to things mundane had fallen off after seeing Krishna. They said, they would follow him or give up their bodies. Krishna, however, made them agree to go back and assured them that they would be well received by their husbands. The *munipatnis* returned to the ashrama and when one of them took objection to his wife's conduct in visiting Krishna, she concentrating on the feet of the Lord left her mortal coil and sundered all the bonds of karma.

Observing this unheard of phenomena, the munis penitently wailed for their own folly in not being able to recognise the divinity of Krishna. They cried out:

> 'Fie on our lives, fie on our learning, fie on our lineage, fie on our being dexterous in the performance of karma which made us turn away from the Lord. Indeed, this is the delusive power of the Lord, which infatuates even the yogis, coming under which we the twice-born, the teachers of mankind are allured into self-centredness. Ah! Look at the wonderful devotion to Sri Krishna of even the women, the devotion which sundered all their attachment to things worldly and severed even the bonds of birth and death. These women have not undergone the ceremonies which go to make the twice born; they have not lived in the preceptor's house; they have not performed austerities; they have not discriminated between the Self and the non-self; they do not perform the daily purificatory ceremonies, yet they have acquired undying devotion to Krishna, the Yogin of yogins and not we, though endowed with all these samskaras! The Lord, in His infinite mercy reminded us, who were fooled by self-aggrandisement, who were intoxicated with our worldly belongings, of Him through the words of the gopa boys. Or else, what did He, who was a *purnakama* (of fulfilled wishes), who was the lord and fulfiller of all wishes like liberation, lack to ask from us who were his servants? This indeed is the Lord's mockery!'[3]

Then comes the most misunderstood and most misinterpreted part of Krishna's life, viz. his association with the gopis of Vrindavana. Caught in the throes of lust as we are, we are apt to put our own interpretation on the episode, but devotees all along the march of time have loved the Lord as their sweet heart, and that love, that devotion is considered to be the acme of devotion. In such a love there is no bargaining, no bartering. The devotee wants to give his all and so it is most difficult of comprehension for us whose habit has been acquisition. Speaking about the love of gopis, Swami Vivekananda says:

> 'He is the simple Krishna, ever the same Krishna who played with the Gopis. Ah, that most marvellous passage of his

[3] *Bhagavata* X. 23. 39-45.

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life, the most difficult to understand, and which none ought to attempt to understand until he has become perfectly chaste and pure, that most marvellous expansion of love, allegorised and expressed in that beautiful play at Brindavan, which none can understand but he who has become mad with love, drunk deep of the cup of love! Who can understand the throes of the love of the Gopis —the very ideal of love, love that wants nothing, love that even does not care for heaven, love that does not care for anything in this world, or the world to come?'

A Sri Krishna Chaitanya, a Sri Ramakrishna only could experience such intense longing for God. Let us not, therefore, commit blasphemy by talking ill of a subject that we little understand, on the other hand let us purify ourselves to gain if possible, even a little bit of devotion. Sri Suka expounding this part of Krishna's life to Parikshit, instructs him in what light people should understand this sport of the Lord. He says:

'Deviation from *dharma* has been seen in the case of the Incarnations of God, but these deviations do not touch them being glorious like the all consuming blazing fire. Therefore let none but an Incarnation ever even in thought attempt to imitate these actions of theirs; if others foolishly try, they are sure to be destroyed as those who drink poison, imitating Shiva.'[4]

Moreover, 'the Lord taking a human form out of compassion for the creatures, sports in various ways so that hearing about them man may become absorbed in Him.'[5]

Lastly, winding up the discussion on the subject Suka says:

'One who hears or expounds with *shraddha* this sport of Vishnu (the all pervading Spirit) with the ladies of Vraja, soon attains highest devotion to God and gets rid of all desires, the baneful disease of the heart.'[6]

Krishna's mission in Vraja was over. He was a grown up lad. The wheel of time turned once more. Propelled by destiny and coming to know of the real identity of Krishna, Kamsa sends Akrura to bring Krishna to Mathura. Akrura a pious soul who had come to know of Krishna's divine birth goes to Vraja and on the way muses:

'What meritorious deeds had I performed, what austerities did I do, what gifts did I give to the deserving, that I shall be blessed with the vision of the Lord! * * * All my sins are destroyed today, fruitful is my life, that I shall bow down at the feet of the Lord, the feet that are the subject of meditation of the yogis.'[7]

Musing in this strain, meditating on the beautiful form and thinking of the warm welcome that he would receive, Akrura reached Vraja at dusk, as the gentle rays of the setting sun colourfully illuminated the magnificent village. At a distance he saw the approaching figure of the yellow-clad, blue-complexioned

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[4] धर्मव्यतिक्रमोदृष्ट ईश्वराणां च साहसम् ।
तेजीयसां न दोषाय वह्नेः सर्वभुजो यथा ॥
नैतत् समाचरेज्जातु मनसापि ह्यनीश्वरः ।
विनश्यत्याचरन् मौढ्याद्यथारुद्रोऽब्धिजं विषम् ॥
Bhagavata X. 33. 30–31.

[5] अनुग्रहाय भूतानां मानुषं देहमास्थितः ।
भजते तादृशीः क्रीडा याः श्रुत्वा तत्परो भवेत् ॥
Bhagavata X. 33. 37.

[6] विक्रीडितं व्रजवधूभिरिदं च विष्णोः
श्रद्धान्वितोऽनुशृणुयादथ वर्णयेद् यः ।
भक्तिं परां भगवति प्रतिलभ्य कामं
हृद्रोगमाश्वपहिनोत्यचिरेण धीरः ॥
Bhagavata X. 33. 40.

[7] किं मयाऽऽचरितं भद्रं किं तप्तं परमं तपः ।
कि वाथाप्यर्हते दत्तं यद् द्रक्ष्याम्यद्य केशवम् ॥
Bhagavata X. 38. 3.

ममाद्यामङ्गलं नष्टं फलवांश्चैव मे भवः ।
यन्नमस्ये भगवतो योगिध्येयाङ्घ्रिपङ्कजम् ॥
Bhagavata X. 38. 6.

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Krishna wending his way back home from the pastures. As he approached, Akrura descended from his chariot and prostrated before him. Krishna noticed his devotion, lifted him up and warmly embracing him took him into the house. Akrura was beside himself with joy at the hearty reception he received from the Lord and for a time speech failed him.

It will be not out of place if we mention here the instances of Arjuna, Uddhava and Sudama who loved Krishna as their friend. Arjuna was of the same age as Krishna and they were cousins too, so there existed a sweet relation between the two. Many were the adventures they jointly undertook. For the sake of his love Sri Krishna even became Arjuna's charioteer, and groomed his horses.

Uddhava was Krishna's constant companion and adviser from the day of his arrival in Mathura, but when a little ego entered his heart, that he was the best devotee of the Lord, Krishna in Uddhava's interest sent him to observe the devotion of the unlettered gopis of Vraja. Uddhava astonished at the intensity of their devotion to Krishna bursts out in praise of them.

> 'Oh! Let me be one of the blades of grass, or one of the creepers or one of the shrubs of Vrindavana so that I can come in contact with the dust of the feet of the Gopis, who, cutting off the Gordian knot of attachment to relations, and rejecting even the traditional path are established in devotion to Krishna, which devotion is sought after even by the Srutis.'[8]

Thus did Krishna correct his erring devotee.

The scene that is depicted in the *Bhagavata* of the love between Sudama and Krishna is splendidly lavish, at the same time touching. Guru Sandipani's abode brought them together and there they grew into thick friends. But events in their life separated them for a long time. Sudama was poor but pious and lived on what came unsought. Having a large family to feed, he at the importunities of his wife started for Dwaraka with the intention of seeing his Lord and friend. He took as present a few morsels of beaten rice packed in an old torn cloth, for he had no better thing to offer. Reaching Dwaraka and seeing thousands of palaces of the same description he knew not where to go. At last making himself bold he entered one of them. Krishna who was resting with his queen on a couch, seeing Kuchela * from a distance rushed to meet him. Embracing him affectionately he seated him on the couch, washed his feet and in various other ways expressed his joy at the meeting. A long time they conversed on the pleasant days they had spent at the ashrama of the Guru. Then Krishna suddenly, as if remembering the purpose of his visit and with the purpose of bestowing prosperity on Kuchela asked him, 'Friend, what present have you brought for me? I am pleased immensely at any thing that is offered with devotion.' But Sudama felt ashamed to produce that insignificant present of his. Where were the palace comforts and where was his worthless gift, thought he. Krishna observing his hesitation himself drew out the package from Kuchela. Taking a morsel out of the packet Krishna ate with great relish and satisfaction. It is said that when he tried to eat another morsel his queen snatched it away from him re-

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[8] आसामहो चरणरेणुजुषामहं स्यां
वृन्दावने किमपि गुल्मलतौषधीनाम् ।
या दुस्त्यजं स्वजनमार्यपथं च हित्वा
भेजुर्मुकुन्दपदवीं श्रुतिभिर्विमृग्याम् ॥

Bhagavata X. 48. 61.

* Another name of Sudama.

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marking that, that one morsel would give Sudama enough wealth and prosperity not only in this life but in the lives to come as well. Such was the Lord's compassion.

A spiritual aspirant thus finds the different types of devotion, by which the different devotees approach the Godhead, in the life of Sri Krishna. God is amenable to all types, one may liken Him to a child who requires all one's care as in the case of Yasoda, Devaki and Vasudeva; one may treat him as one's friend as in the case of the cowherds, Sudama etc; one may consider him a sweetheart as in the case of the Gopis; or one may consider Him as their saviour as most of the people of Vraja believed Krishna to be. He responds to every one if the devotion be sincere. Sri Krishna in the Gita, says 'By whatsoever way men worship Me, even so do I accept them,'[9] and this saying was fulfilled in his life, to the letter and the spirit.

Next we see Krishna as the unrelenting champion of righteousness, wherever unrighteousness was observed he put it down mercilessly. The tender looking boy of Vraja became the hero overnight, foiling all plans of Kamsa to kill him through the agency of the wild elephant and still wilder wrestlers, he beat Kamsa in his own game and killed him even as he was surrounded by his henchmen. The whole of Mathura breathed a sigh of relief and gratefully cheered Krishna's entrance into Mathura as the harbinger of peace and plenty. For the sake of righteousness he fought through out his life.

One of the central themes in Krishna's life seems to be, work for work's sake. Though he killed Kamsa and had the whole of his kingdom at his disposal he never thought of ascending the throne. He immediately placed Ugrasena, the father of Kamsa on the throne and was glad to live under him. In the many instances we come across in his life when he helped to retrieve dharma and vacate aggression he never tried to establish his own rule; when his work was finished he would silently withdraw from the scene. This idea of work for work's sake he taught Arjuna when he said, 'To work you have the right not to the fruits thereof.'[10]

Righteousness and manliness went hand in hand with him. He could not entertain the idea that a righteous man could be unmanly and that is the reason why we see him flaring up at Arjuna in the battle-field of Kurukshetra when the latter laid down his arms and expressed his desire to desist from the fight. 'Yield not to unmanliness, O Partha, it does not become you, shaking off this mean faint-heartedness, arise, O scorcher of foes,'[11] says he. Again he warns Arjuna, 'If, however, you do not fight this righteous battle, then failing in your duty and losing your reputation, you will incur sin.'[12]

This is the message of Krishna for all, wheresoever may one be stationed in life one can follow this message with profit. Spiritual life is no exception. We may not be faced with the historic battle of Kurukshetra itself or for the matter of that we may not have to take any weapons at all in the literal sense of the term but everyone of us has to face the

[9] ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तान्स्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।
B. Gita 4. 11

[10] कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।
B. Gita 2. 47.

[11] क्लैब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते ।
क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्त्वोत्तिष्ठ परंतप ॥
B. Gita 2. 2.

[12] अथ चेत्वमिमं धर्म्यं संग्रामं न करिष्यसि ।
ततः स्वधर्मं कीर्तिं च हित्वा,पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥
B. Gita 2. 33.

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battle of life. *'Veera bhogya vasundhara,'* the earth is for the enjoyment of the brave and strong, says a Sanskrit adage. Much more bravery and strength is required in religious life. In the spiritual regions we have to encounter our own nature which is subtle and elusive and therefore the battle is life-long and continuous, under such circumstances weakness is dangerous. Even a momentary relaxation will undo a life's effort, consequently with an untiring watch over the mind from being attacked by the enemies like lust, greed, desire and anger, the spiritual seeker has to plough through the ocean of life with manliness.

Summing up we have that, the generality of mankind wants some sort of ideal to follow and that is why inspite of the condemnation of the idol worship those condemnators themselves keep some symbol representing God, the Christians have their cross with the crucified Christ on it, the Mohammedans turn their faces West towards the Kaaba when they pray and worship at the graves of saints. So, man as long as he thinks himself as a body—rarely do we come across *jivanmuktas* i.e. those who have overcome body-consciousness —has to accept a personal God. The Lord is approachable by bhakti of different types, the criterion being simplicity and purity of character. An unswerving determination to reach the goal only can take a man to it. Sri Krishna's life illustrates these ideas clearly and elaborately. So we Indians whose national ideal has been spirituality must pause and think whether our life-stream runs in consonance with that of our forefathers, if not, whether the present trend is not dangerous, not only to our nation but to the world as a whole. On this occasion when we might have celebrated the Krishna *Jayanti* let us re-assess our attainments and without fear or favour change our course of life if it has been running in the wrong direction.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA

K. C. K. E. RAJA

In modern times there have been few men whose influence over mankind in different parts of the world has been greater than those of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda Swamiji, an influence which has always helped to bring harmony and peace and the light of understanding and sympathy into the minds and hearts of the people. Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother, wife of Sri Ramakrishna, was to him throughout his life the living symbol of the Divine Mother, Sakti or Kali, 'the Active Power of Supreme Reality' manifesting herself through all creation as the play of Brahman or the Absolute in the static form. A complete merging of his own personality with that of the Divine Mother preceded Sri Ramakrishna's attainment of spiritual perfection, while Vivekanandaji the chosen disciple of Sri Ramakrishna carried the inspiration and teachings of his Master to the nations of Asia, Europe and America and founded that Order of religious leaders, the Ramakrishna Mission, which has spread spiritual enlightenment and a growing range of ameliorative effort among the peoples of the earth.

All great religious leaders, who won the hearts of the people and left a lasting impression on their lives, manifested along with their devotion to God an all-pervading love for men and other living creatures, based on an understanding of the inner unity of all creation in spite of a bewildering diversity of forms and

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characteristics; this love arose above the hideous manifestations of cruelty, anger, greed and lust which bring sorrow and suffering to the world, through a recognition of the presence of the Divine Spirit everywhere and an abiding faith in the gradual process of evolution of all beings from the lowest depths of degradation to the highest levels of moral and spiritual attainment. Sri Ramakrishna's heart overflowed with this divine milk of kindness and of love.

Religious experiences of the highest level, if they are to become truly a part of one's being, have to be realised by each individual, a process which transcends mere intellectual comprehension or emotional acceptance. These higher reaches of spiritual attainment have been far beyond me and I have therefore failed to understand and grasp the meaning and the significance of that body of recorded experiences of Masters like Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Vivekananda in their highest moods of Samadhi and of direct communion with the Supreme Being. Nor have I been able to reconcile myself to the idea of accepting them or Jesus Christ or the Buddha as incarnations of God; to me they remain spiritual giants who, through intuitive powers and through strenuous spiritual effort, have lifted themselves far above our own levels of attainment; they stand out among men like Mount Everest and other peaks of the Himalayas rising high above the low-lying level of the Gangetic plain; they deserve our highest reverence, devotion and love and their helping hands have assisted men, in the past, to lift themselves from the morass of worldly pleasures, sorrows and successes to the serene height of a fuller and richer life and to the vision of a widened horizon of higher social, ethical and spiritual values; and I am sure that this beneficent influence will continue to prevail in the years yet to come.

I have ventured to state briefly these views of mine because what has appealed to me most is the personality of Sri Ramakrishna in its most lovable form, his universal sympathy which embraces all classes and types of people, his love of the simple pleasures and joys of life, the homeliness of his similes and yet the wisdom and profundity of his teachings often given out to those around him in casual remarks, and the humility that remained throughout as an innate characteristic, in spite of ceaseless outpouring of adoration from the hearts of all those who were around him. I recall what he told Keshab Chandra Sen on one occasion:

> 'Why do you write about me in your paper? You cannot make a man great by writing about him in books and magazines. If God makes a man great, then everybody knows about him even though he lives in a forest. When flowers bloom in the deep woods, the bees find them, but the flies do not. What can man do? Don't look up to him. Man is but a worm. The tongue that praises you today will abuse you tomorrow. I don't want name and fame. May I always remain the humblest of the humble and the lowliest of the lowly!'

There is a simplicity and directness in his teachings and he speaks with the sincerity and absolute faith of personal realisation and experience. I may quote some examples, as far as possible in his own words, from the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna.

In reply to a question by Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar as to whether God had endowed some with more powers and others with less, Sri Ramakrishna said:

> 'as the All-pervading Spirit he exists in all beings, even in the ant. But the manifestations of his power are different in different beings; otherwise, how can one person put ten to flight, while another can't face even one? And why do all people respect you? Have you grown a pair of horns?'

And there was loud laughter among all those who were present.

Again he tells Vidyasagar:

> 'Faith and devotion. One realises God easily through devotion. He is grasped through ecstasy of love.'
>
> 'Through selfless work, love of God grows in the heart. Then through His grace, one realises Him in course of time. God can be seen. One can talk to Him as I am talking to you.'

But he rightly warns that the vast majority among us must pass through a long period of

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common human existence before we become capable of high spiritual attainment. He says :

'But you must remember that nothing can be achieved except in its proper time. Some persons must pass through many experiences and perform many worldly duties before they can turn their attention to God ; so they have to wait a long time. If an abscess is lanced before it is soft, the result is not good ; the surgeon makes the opening when it is soft and has come to a head. Once a child said to its mother : "Mother, I am going to sleep now. Please wake me up when I feel the call of nature." "My child," said the mother, "when it is time for that, you will wake up yourself. I shan't have to wake you."'

Modern psychology tells us that an evil thought or the propensity for sinful deeds cannot be successfully suppressed by an effort of the will ; such a tendency must be supplanted by a positive effort to turn our minds to good thoughts and works of charity. Sri Ramakrishna says the same thing :

'Anger and lust cannot be destroyed. If you must feel desire and temptation, then desire to realise God, feel tempted by Him.'

'God cannot be realised without purity of heart. One receives the grace of God by subduing the passions — lust, anger and greed. Then one sees God.'

He stresses the importance of the teaching of the Gita to lay aside 'attachment' in all the thoughts and actions of life. He identifies attachment with Maya and says that its opposite is Daya or compassion :

'Attachment means the feeling of "my-ness" toward one's relatives. It is the love one feels for one's parent, one's brother, one's sister, one's wife and children. Compassion is the love one feels for all beings of the world. It is an attitude of equality. If you see anywhere an instance of compassion, as in Vidyasagar, know that it is due to the grace of God. Through compassion one serves all beings. Maya also comes from God. Through Maya, God makes one serve one's relatives. But one thing should be remembered : Maya keeps us in ignorance and entangles us in the world, whereas Daya makes our heart pure and gradually unties our bonds.'

Sri Ramakrishna's mood was one of complete devotion to and acceptance of God, which gave no room for doubts or fears. One day the Master was told by a devotee (M.) that Vidyasagar had cried out in despair, 'What is the use of calling on God' and had referred to the slaughter of a hundred thousand prisoners at the command of Chenghiz Khan, which God had seen and did not in any way prevent. Sri Ramakrishna replied,

'Is it possible to understand God's action and His motive ? He creates, He preserves, and He destroys. Can we even understand why he destroys ? I say to the Divine Mother : "O Mother, I do not need to understand. Please give me love for Thy Lotus Feet". The aim of human life is to attain bhakti. As for other things the Mother knows best. I have come to the garden to eat mangoes. What is the use of my calculating the number of trees, branches, and leaves ? I only eat mangoes ; I don't need to know the number of trees and leaves.'

Many of us have asked the same question and have not had an answer satisfying to ourselves. With our limited intelligence and narrow range of experience and understanding of the whole picture in the mind of the Supreme Creator, which is continually unfolding itself in endless forms of creation and growth, of decay and destruction, is undoubtedly beyond our comprehension. The tragedy of the endless panorama of all creatures, including man, struggling to survive at the cost of the lives of other living creatures—*this ghastly drama of the will to live divided against itself*—is a phenomenon hard to reconcile with our ethical notions or with our concept of God as an all-merciful Being. How can we reconcile the philosophy of *Reverence for life* with this all-pervading picture of ruthless competition in the struggle for existence ?

It may be of interest to note that, faced with these problems, Schweitzer, the great medical Missionary, who has spent a lifetime in alleviating the sufferings of poor, ignorant and illiterate men and women in the wilds of Africa, saw light suddenly dawning on him. He felt that *the will to live* which motivates all living creatures must have an ultimate and enduring purpose. He struggled on to the vision that this purpose was *to attain spiritual*

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unity with Infinite Being. He realised that all life is interspersed with suffering, and that

> 'The will to live which has attained to knowledge is therefore seized with deep pity for all creatures. It experiences not only the woe of mankind but that of all creatures with it.'

When this powerful feeling of pity for all becomes established in the life of an individual *the will to live* becomes diverted from self-interest and man's purification begins. Thus Schweitzer, through a long journey of mental agony, came to the conclusion of complete acceptance of the philosophy of *Reverence for Life*.

Sri Ramakrishna had the rare insight and power necessary for detecting at first sight the spiritual quality of an individual. At his second visit to the Ashram,* Sri Ramakrishna asked M. (Mahendranath Gupta) whether he was married and had children and expressed disappointment on receiving replies in the affirmative to both. Later, he said to him affectionately :

> 'You see, you have certain good signs. I know them by looking at a person's forehead, his eyes, and so on.'

M. became afterwards one of the chief disciples and wrote the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna in Bengalee.

The Master detected early the supreme quality of Narendra for leadership and for attainment to the highest level of spirituality. He chose Narendra (later Vivekananda) as his successor to spread his teachings over wide spaces of the earth and to establish the Order which would give to succeeding generations light and guidance leading to spiritual growth, moral regeneration and social service. From the beginning Sri Ramakrishna bestowed infinite care on him. It is said that whenever evil thoughts entered the mind of his young disciple Sri Ramakrishna sensed it immediately and helped him to rise above such feelings, thoughts and actions. He led Narendra, a Brahmo and a free-thinker, gradually to the acceptance of Hindu ideals and Hindu culture and ultimately led him to the highest level of spiritual attainment, which transcends human understanding, culminating in direct vision and contact with the Supreme Being.

The life and teachings of Vivekananda Swamiji form an imperishable part of the recent history of India and of the world. I need not therefore refer to them in detail. Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Vivekananda are living symbols of the potential and kinetic types of that spiritual energy which manifests itself in endless forms of creation. Both continue to live in spirit in spite of their departure from human existence, through the expanding activity of the great Mission that was established. Sri Ramakrishna remains as an inexhaustible reservoir from which spiritual enlightenment goes forth, and the impetus given by Sri Vivekananda gives shape and form to that enlightenment to change itself into an ever-widening stream of human effort to transform the minds and hearts of men and to minister also to the alleviation of suffering and pain.

* The speaker means the Dakshineswar Temple where Sri Ramakrishna lived at that time—*Ed.*

GODWARD

LOKU GEHANI

Strange, with so much luggage thou plod !
Wayfarer, art thou going to God ?
Then listen what sages tell thee,
And Blessed and happy thou wilt be.

Take nothing with thee, go there bare-handed ;
On this road to happiness, to the temple of the BELOVED.
There to thy surprise, thou wilt find,
One who is empty is blessed with Pure Mind.

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"VALMIKI'S SRI RAMACHANDRA"

P. NAGARAJA RAO

In my approach to the study of Sri Rama's character needless to say, I shall be treading, over again the well trodden ground. Reverent admiration for Sri Rama's character is a part of the fundamental faith of every devout Hindu, be he a Saiva or a Vaishnava. Whether we look upon Rama as an *avatara* of Vishnu or as a human being who succeeded in being a perfect exemplar of all the human virtues; we shall be compelled to confess ourselves to be the unwearied admirers of Sri Rama's transcendental excellence. Those who look upon Sri Rama as an avatara seek, indeed to trace his perfection, to his being *ad hoc* human manifestation of the divine person; on the other hand those who regard Sri Rama, as a perfect human being, seem to my view, are also doing justice to his character, in that the perfection of his character is regarded as the result of his strenuous self-discipline, not the mere gift of the divine. However, it is perhaps fair to say that the difference between the two views seems narrower, than is often thought. Human qualities in such perfection are not indeed anything but a product of the grace of the divine.

The study of Sri Rama's character has a terrific topical value to us Indians today and to humanity at large, that lives under the shadow of the alarming nuclear developments. In our world of hectic hurry and over-organised technocracy, we are ceasing to be human. We have no time or inclination for anything except the pleasures of the passing hour. No ideals attract us, except the excitement of the moment. We live intensely in the present, we do not look before or after. We are stricken by psychic anxieties, cloven by emotional conflicts, beset by economic insecurities and are above all assailed by political doubts. We want to fly from ourselves. Twentieth century man 'encounters half-faiths, fragmentary creeds, unaesthetic arts, and doubtful political nostrums.' In the words of T. S. Eliot 'the best lack all conviction, and the worst are full of passionate intensity.' Men in their quest for false happiness, spare no efforts; they count the opposing dangers and suffering as nothing. Recent psychologists have lamented the moderner's pre-occupation with sex.

To us today, the Ramayana has an imperative message. The poets' poet Valmiki has given through the medium of great poetry the picture of the great man, growing and manifesting his greatness. The Ramayana is neither old nor new. It is eternal. 'Modernity is not a matter of date, but of outlook'.

The classics have a very important function. It is wrong to regard that the classics are merely guardians of the past, for they are equally the heralds of the future. They are dead if they are mechanically and unthinkingly read. When we read and ponder over the verses of the Ramayana, they re-emerge in answer to our present problems. They have the power to produce from age to age the necessary correction to man's sense of values and the conduct of life, by creating the moral ideal which gives them the vision of truth.

The Ramayana of Valmiki is hailed as the first piece of great poetry and Valmiki as the first great poet. It is the *adikavya* and Valmiki is the *adikavi*. All the great poets that followed Valmiki have paid their tribute to his genius with great love and respect. Kalidasa refers to him with respect in his *Raghuvamsa*. He hails Valmiki as the sage of former times and humbly describes his own role as one who makes a string, for the already perforated, drilled, precious stones made ready by Valmiki. Valmiki is described by Professor Hiriyanna. 'as the morning star of Indian classical poetry.' The circumstances associated with the birth of Ramayana are significant:

'Valmiki the great sage of Kosala, was thinking of describing in a worthy manner the fortunes

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of Rama the divine hero of his country. Revolving this idea in his mind, he one day went as usual to the river Tamasa to perform his mid-day ablutions. But on that day it so happened that he saw in the vicinity of the river a fowler killing one of a pair of lovely birds that were disporting themselves on the branch of a tree. The fowler singled out the male bird and brought it down with his arrow. Seeing the bird lie on the ground, weltering in its blood, its mate began to wail in plaintive tones. The soft hearted sage was moved to intense pity at this sight; and his grief spontaneously burst forth in the form of a *Sloka* which according to tradition was the first rhythmic utterance outside the old archaic language of the Vedas. Valmiki looked upon this sloka as suggesting to him the keynote of the contemplated work and under the spell of its inspiration composed his great poem — the Ramayana and became celebrated as the adikavi.' [1]

The great poet Bhavabhuti derives his inspiration for his drama *Uttara Rama Charita* from Valmiki. He regards Valmiki as the essence of poetry. Valmiki is the sage who has realised the supreme being in the form of sound. Brahma exhorts Valmiki to expound the story of Rama and crowns him as the first poet. Valmiki's Ramayana has 'made our world beautiful'. That is the verdict of Bhavabhuti.

The author of Anargha Raghava, Murari, raising the question as to why he again chooses to write on the same story of Rama, answers that there is no second Rama than the one created by Valmiki. He is inexhaustible in his, significance. The great Ananda Vardhana who restricts the list of great poets to three, heads the list with Valmiki. Further, he declares that Valmiki is the greatest among the past poets that has realised and produced a great work of poetry whose essence is Dhvani.

The Ramayana has inspired many a modern scholar in the east and the west. Sri Aurobindo Ghosh writes :

'Not all perhaps can enter at once into the spirit of this masterpiece, but those who have once done so will never admit any other poem in the world as its superior.'

Sir Monier Williams writes :

'There are in the whole range of world's literature few more charming poems than the Ramayana. The classical purity, the clearness and the simplicity of its style, the exquisite touches of rare poetic feeling with which it abounds, its graphic description of its heroic incidents and of Nature's grandest scenes, the deep acquaintance it displays with the conflicting workings and of the most refined emotions of the human heart — all entitle it, to rank among the most beautiful compositions that have appeared at any period in any country.

'Although the Hindus like the Greeks, have only two great Epic poems, namely, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, yet to compare these with the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* is to compare the Indus and the Ganges rising in the snows of the world's most colossal range, swollen by numerous tributaries spreading into vast shallows or travelling into too deep divergent channels with the streams of Attica or the mountainous torrents of Thessaly.'

Principal Griffith writes :

'Nowhere else are poetry and morality so charmingly united, each elevating the other as in this really holy poem.'

The immortality of the Ramayana is proclaimed by Brahma :

'As long as the hills endure and rivers flow, till that date Ramayana will continue to flourish.' [2]

The personality of Sri Rama is a thoroughly integrated entity. It is a rounded personality. There is no lop-sided development in it. No god is cheated of his due and none is overpaid. All the faculties are present in their due proportion and necessary form. He was the ideal man looked on by all alike. Valmiki has expressed the widespread total influence of Rama's greatness on all his contemporaries in a memorable verse :

'He who has not seen Rama, nor he who has not been seen by Rama, stands censured not only by society but is condemned by his own self.' [3]

Rama's popularity was immense. All gazed on Him and were gratified.

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[1] मा निषाद प्रतिष्ठां त्वमगमः शाश्वतीः समाः ।
यत्क्रौञ्चमिथुनादेकमवधीः काममोहितम् ॥

[2] यावत्स्थास्यन्ति गिरयः सरितश्च महीतले ।
तावद्रामायणकथा लोकेषु प्रचरिष्यति ॥

[3] यश्च रामं न पश्येत्तु यं च रामो न पश्यति ।
निन्दितः स भवेल्लोके स्वात्माप्येनं विगर्हते ॥

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It is recorded in the Ramayana that men in the time of Rama were so impressed by the greatness of Rama's personality that they all became like him. In modern psychological parlance he was their behaviour pattern. Further the concept and image of Rama is popular with both the schools of thought — the Saiva and the Vaishnava. It may interest the Saiva to note that Saiva agamas, though they forbid the worship of Lord Vishnu in the *pradosa kala,* exception is made with reference to two incarnations of Vishnu i.e. the avataras of Rama and Nṛshimha. The Master composer of South India, Tyagaraja in a celebrated song, draws attention to the fact that the name of Rama, is combined excellence of the two great mantras (the astakshari, Namo Narayana and aum Namasivaya). It is the combination of the two life-giving letters Ra and ma. The exclusion of these letters makes the mantras not only lose their meaning but acquire the undesirable meaning. The name of Rama is popularly described as the *Taraka mantra.* The Kasi Kanda records, that Lord Visvanatha of Varanasi whispers into the ears of all, Taraka mantra for their moksha.

The most outstanding quality of Sri Rama's character, the quality that compels not admiration alone, but the deepest respect and the most reverent study, the quality that in itself embodies a philosophy of conduct of astounding comprehensiveness is that Rama is essentially a *dharmatma.* The term dharmatma is all inclusive. If one were to put the question, adopting the language of the *Gita,* 'what is the language of the Dharmatma? How does he speak, how does he sit, how does he walk?' We have to read Valmiki's account for the answer. All the qualities of Rama follow his *dharmanistha.* He is anchored in *Dharma.*

Dasaratha described Rama as the 'wise elder' in the practice of Dharma (dharmajyesta). Rama subordinated the two values, possessions and passions, to the behest of Dharma. Rama declared to the irate Lakshmana, when he offered martial assistance to put down all opposition to him :

> 'human experience makes clear that the pursuit of dharma alone brings in its trail wealth, pleasures and all else, in the manner one attains all aspirations from the marriage with a beloved and obedient woman.'[4]

Sri Rama's beloved Sita described Rama to Anasuya as the very embodiment of perfection,

> 'How could one like me not bear the great love I have towards a person like Rama? He is a man of controlled senses and permanent affection and absolutely righteous — one who reveres other women as his mother.'

Sita in a mood of appreciation exclaims :

> 'The evil born of desires are three-fold : They are falsehood, association with other's wives and being harmful to others without any cause for hostility. Falsehood has never been thine, nor can it ever be thine. Thou art never even in fancy guilty of going after other's wives, which sin destroys all religious merit. Thou art always attracted by thy wife alone and by no other woman.'

Kausalya the mother of Rama testifies to Rama's impregnable faith in Dharma. In her exhortation to Rama she says :

> 'That Dharma for which you have decided to undergo the task of going to the forest for fourteen years, that very same dharma will protect you.'

Maricha describes Rama as the idol of Dharma (*Ramo vigraha van Dharmah*).

Though Rama was anchored in Dharma, he did not neglect the other aspects of human life. Valmiki's presentation gives us the integrated picture of Rama's character. Rama had all the excellences that mark for perfection.

Sri Rama's physical personality exerted on the readers an enduring influence. His is the most 'auspicious, resplendent form' (*divya mangala vigraha*). He had imposing, lovely and proportionate limbs that attracted all. He is known for his pleasant personality traits. He had self-possession above all qualities (*niyatatma*). This did not make him indifferent to others' troubles. He showed

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[4] धर्मार्थकामाः किल जीवलोके
समीक्षिता धर्मफलोदयेषु ।
ये तत्र सर्वे स्युरसंशयं मे
भार्येव वश्याभिमता सपुत्रा ॥

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sympathy to others with a rare detachment. He loved life and indulged in desires and activities without endangering his firm stand in Dharma. He knew all the fine arts. He was a *visarada* and *vichaksana*. He had tastes and powers of discrimination. He had keen perception and correct judgement of men and things. At all times he remained unagitated with perfect poise : He was the first to speak to strangers when he met them and disarmed them.[5] He always maintained an ever pleasant countenance (*Sadaika priya darsana*). He was ever calm and exerted perfect self-discipline. He never insulted or spoke harshly to others. He had no love for gossip, scandal or useless little talk.

His moral qualities have inspired many heroes through all the ages. The foremost among his moral qualities are his superhuman passion for Dharma, (from which flow all his other qualities) ; serenity in the most trying circumstances, coupled with his undaunted courage to implement his moral resolve without any fuss or theatricality in the face of all odds. One has to turn to the debate between Bharata and Rama when the former begged him to go back to Ayodhya. Several clever men tried their best to confuse the issues adroitly in the mind of Rama. Some said that he should live the life of a householder and not abandon his *asrama* and go to forests. Others pointed out that it is not Kshatriya-dharma (the duty of king) to go to forests for a long period. He should protect his subjects and carry out the work of his father and complete it. Jabali the cunning Brahmin advises Rama not to give up the pleasant fruits of this world in favour of a doubtful, unreal and the unknown fruits in another. Vasista asks Rama on his authority to go back to Ayodhya. Rama listens to all and answers each and refutes their arguments. Any man of lesser resolve and lesser devotion to Dharma than Rama would surely have been confounded and confused and gone mad. Rama stood like a rock of ages. He did not resort to casuistry or quibbling. He followed the spirit of his father's words. He stood unassailed by anything. When Rama was being sent to the forest Dasaratha suggested to the minister that Rama should be furnished with enough goods and money to enable him to live in ease for a period of fourteen years. Kaikeyi resented it and Rama said that it is not the spirit of the promise. The promise implies that he should live like a poor man. Rama always stuck to the spirit of a decision and did not swerve from it, under any pretext. He never slackened his resolve. When Rama was about to leave for the forest Kaikeyi felt that Rama might not do so, taking advantage of his father's state of health, and banking on the popular support he had. Rama assured the doubting Kaikeyi, letting her know, his strength and stature. He said

> 'Oh queen, I am not a materialistic worldling clinging to possessions and power. I am the equal of the sages who always uphold nothing but Dharma.'

Sri Rama had an active love of truth and justice. He had an unconquerable faith in the triumph and ultimate victory of Dharma. He led an unremitting moral life against all odds. His intellectual powers were matched to his moral earnestness. His acuteness of intellect was responsible for the probity of his conduct. He had a rare tenacity in holding on to his convictions. He never went back on his promise. He never spoke twice. His loyalty to his friends is unmatched. He never suffered injustice when he encountered it. He put it down with amazing courage. He had a judicious mind which was not swayed by the impulses of the moment or disturbed by prejudices. He weighed the pros and cons of an issue in an instant. He spoke little but when he did it, it had tremendous force and effect. He had a balanced mind and an intuitive sagacity all his own. He had a profound sense of humour and a capacity for pointed remarks. We see his humour in the way he fooled Surpanaka.

[5] स तु नित्यं प्रशान्तात्मा मृदुपूर्वञ्च भाषते ।
उच्यमानोऽपि परुषं नोत्तरं प्रतिपद्यते ॥

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When Vibhishana sought refuge with Rama Sugriva advised Rama that he should not be taken as he has deserted his own brother, and heaven knows what he would not do. Rama replies 'brothers are much the same everywhere, except in my household'. That silenced Sugriva and put him in his place.

Sri Rama was independent and critical but not cynical. He was never downcast or felt helpless. He never exhibited dependence (adhinata). He had a wonderful power of forgiving men of their faults. When any one spoke harshly to him, he did not retort. He expressed his sense of gratefulness even for a single act of kindness done to him by others. He never remembered even if one rendered hundreds of unkind acts. He was the prince of forgiveness. He always judged himself and his conduct by the strictest standards. He was lenient to others and condoned their lapses. He was never vindictive in his acts. Sita in a celebrated passage appeals to his sense of compassion and says :

> 'Be they good men or bad, be they deserving of death, still they must be pardoned and treated with mercy by one claiming to be Arya. For no one is above error (*na kascinnaparadhyati*).'

She uses a double negative. Compassion for all, is the general character of Rama.

Sri Rama was of easy access to all. He was friend to all. All that lived loved to gaze on the ineffable charm, the transcendent loveliness of the radiant personality of Sri Rama. Each sought him as their ultimate refuge in distress. They saw in his abounding compassion the assurance that they will be saved. Rama never gave way to any passion that violated Dharma. He was against the exclusive and excessive pursuit of any one value of life over all others. Dharma helps us to restore this balance. Rama spread Dharma from personal example and not verbal propagation. He loved truth (satya) and lived dharma in which satya found its fulfilment.

The theistic Vedanta of Ramanuja looks upon the Ramayana not merely as a great literary classic but as the sacred book of the gospel of *Sharanagati* and *prapatti*. Rama the divine incarnation is described in the *dhyana-sloka* thus :

> 'When the supreme principle which is to be understood by the Vedas took shape in the person of Dasaratha's son, the Vedas transformed themselves into the words of Valmiki as the story of the Ramayana.'[6]

The Ramayana is the sacred book of self-surrender. The ideal of God-love is the supreme act of self-surrender which means weaning oneself away from all other worldly ties. Rama declares in a celebrated verse :

> 'Whosoever but once in his sincerity of heart confesses "O Lord, I am thine", I make him fearless from all. This is my vow to those who unload themselves of all their personal concern in the matter of their salvation.'

This is called prapatti in the Vaishnava terminology. The doctrine of self-surrender has a redeeming simplicity, hard to beat. It is superior and more easy than bhakti. It is open to all irrespective of their creed, sex, age and merit. The Lord never probes into the merits and demerits of the suppliant. He saves the refugee with his unabounding grace. Grace is no commercial transaction. There is no bargaining here. There is no 'give me and I shall give thee'. It is a spontaneous act of the Lord. The bhaktas, like Hanuman realise their utter nothingness. The Lord responds to it. Rama is described as the protector of all *Sarvaloka Sharanya*. 'Where there is Rama, there is no fear, there is no defeat. There is victory.'[7]

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[6] वेदवेद्ये परे पुंसि जाते दशरथात्मजे।
वेदः प्राचेतसादासीत्साक्षाद्रामायणात्मना

[7] यत्र रामो भयं नात्र नास्ति तत्र पराभवः।

Rama, the ancient idol of the heroic ages, the embodiment of truth, of morality, the ideal son, the ideal husband, the ideal father, and above all, the ideal king, this Rama has been presented before us by the great sage Valmiki. — SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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SAGE VYASA

M. V. SRIDATTA SARMA

Sage Vyasa is a great personality in the history of Indian religious thought, literature and philosophy and the position he occupies is a unique one. He is the codifier of all the ethical laws and rules which had taken shape in his times. This eminent sage and philosopher lived in an age of heroic action and puissant intellectualism which was preceded by the age of the Spirit. That vast collection of works which form the bulk of our sacred literature owed its origin to him. Hence the popular saying that all knowledge is the outcome of Vyasa's sayings. (व्यासोच्छिष्टं जगत्सर्वं) In the discourse relating to the path of splendour, Lord Krishna says 'Among sages, I am Vyasa.' (मुनीनामप्यहं व्यास:) —B.G. X-37. As the Vedas are supposed to have been arranged by him in the present form, he is known as Vyasa (*Vivyāsa vedān yasmāt sa tasmād vyasa iti smṛtah*). A priest who gives discourses from sacred works (epics and Puranas) is also termed Vyasa and looked upon with veneration.

The Brahma Vaivarta Purana says that the omnipotent Lord Narayana in the form of Vyasa composed the Puranas for the welfare of the world (*Vistārāya tu lokānām svayam nārāyaṇah prabhuh, Vyāsarupena kṛtavān purāṇāni mahitale*). In Chapter XII of the Kurma Purana, Suta gives a list of seers who were either responsible for or took part in the compilation of the Vedas. We thus see that in each age or Yuga, there was some great personality or seer who would give the direction. The story goes that when Svayambhuva Manu was the Manu in the first *Manvantara* (period of lawgivership), the task of gathering the material was undertaken by him under the direction of Lord Brahma. In the second Dwapara Brahmadeva himself was the Vedavyasa. So, we see a chain of seers or Vyasas who shouldered this responsibility and the term Vedavyasa thus becomes more a designation than a name. Thus, twenty-five seers are stated to have attended to this stupendous task of gathering material in the different epochs of Dwapara. The names of the seers who responded to the call from the third vyasa are as follows : Sukra, Bṛhaspati, Surya, Mṛtyu, Indra, Vasista, Sarasvata, Tridhama, Rsabha, Dharma Prajapati, Sucaksu, Trayaruni, Dhananjaya, Kṛtanjaya, Rtanjaya, Bharadvaja, Gautama, Vacasrava, Tṛnabindu and Valmika. The last Vyasa was Krishna Dwaipayana, the son of Parasara. This Vyasa was born in an island near the Jumna, where he was reared by his mother Satyavati. He was of dark complexion. Hence the appellation Krishna Dwaipayana. As soon as he was born, he took up the life of a hermit and practised the most rigid austerities and by the blessings of Lord Siva codified or classified the Vedas.

'Panca vimse tathā prāpte yasmin vai dwāpare dvijah.
Parāsarasuto vyāsah kṛṣna dwaipāyano abhavat.
Sa eva sarva vedānām purāṇānām pradarsakah.
Pārāsaro mahāyogi kṛṣna dwaipāyano harih.
Ārādhyadevamīśānam dṛṣtvā stutvā trilocanam.
Tatprasādādasau vyāsam vedānām akarot prabhuh.'

Says the Linga Purana thus :

'The omniscient Lord Siva at the end of every Dwapara descends down as Vyasa and in the Kali Age as a Yogacarya. On all occasions four disciples, who have acquired the four essential qualities, sama (tranquillity), dama (self-control), titiksha (forbearing) as also a thorough renunciation of karma surround him as followers.'

Thus, twenty-eight Yogacaryas descended down : Kratu, Satya, Bhargava, Angiras,

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Savitr, Mṛtyu, Satakratu, Vasista, Tridhama, Trivrata, Sarasvata, Satateja, Narayana, Taraksu, Aruni, Deva, Kṛtanjaya, Rtanjaya, Bharadvaja, Gautama, Vacasrava, Sushmayani, Tṛnabindu, Riksa, Sakti, Parasara, Jatukarnya and Krishna Dwaipayana (Cf. Ch. XXXV-14-18). In this series, we see that the last Yogacarya was Krishna Dwaipayana.

In Sivamahatmya Khanda of the Suta Samhita it is stated that just as the Kamika and other Agamas were sprung from Siva, the eighteen Puranas had their origin from that son of Satyavati (Vyasa). Of the two branches of the Vedas, the Karmakanda was expounded by Brahma at the instance of Siva, while the exposition of the Jnanakanda was left entirely in the hands of Vyasa himself. His disciples were four persons (*tasya śiṣyā mahābhāgāh catvāro munisattamāh*). Cf. Ch. I-Sl. 12, 41-44 and 48. In the first instance, the entire Vedic literature was a single whole with four divisions (एक आसीद्यजुर्वेद: ॥ सोऽयमेकश्चतुष्पादो वेद: पूर्व सनातन: ॥).

Of these, the first veda, i.e. the Rgveda was compiled with twenty-one sections or sakhas. The Yajurveda comprised one hundred and one sections. Samaveda, the third of the series consisted of one thousand sakhas. In the Atharva Veda were included nine parts. All this was done by Vyasa himself as a result of careful planning.

'Eka vimsati bhedena Rgvedo bhedito amunā.
Yajurvedo dvijā ekasatabhedena bheditah.
Navadhā bhedito atharva vedah sāmah sahasradhā.
Vyastavedatayā vyāsa iti loke sruto munih.' (OP.Cit., 45-46).

The deft master Vyasa who classified the Vedas appointed four disciples as Acharyas for the four Vedas. Paila was thus made a preceptor for the Rgveda. Similarly, Vaisampayana, Jaimini and Sumantu were appointed preceptors for the Yajur, Saman and Atharva Vedas respectively. The ritualistic treatises for the sacerdotal work were also prepared (*Chaturhotra, Yajnānusṭāna Karma, Adhvaryu* and *Hotra Prayogas* and *Brahma Prayoga*). The preparation of the manuals for the *satra yāga* was undertaken by collecting passages from the three Vedas. Vyasa's disciple Suta became the master for narrating the legendary stories (*itihāsa*).

Says the Kurma Purana thus :

'Really one who knows the Vedas and is by himself a manifestation of the Vedas is the Infinite. A person who takes initiation from him obtains for himself divine communion. Thus, that sage Vedavyasa, son of Parasara having known the eternal knowledge of the Pranava, the root of the Vedas, made up of letters which are imperishable became the all-knowing so much so that all the epics and Puranas originated from him.'

A passage eulogises Vyasa thus :

'Know that Vyasa is none other than the Eternal Lord Narayana. Otherwise, who else could become the author of a monumental work like the Mahabharata ?'

'Krisna dwaipāyanam vyāsam viddhi nārāyanam prabhum.
Kohyanyah pundarikāksāt mahābharatakṛdbhavet.'

Suta says that the Mahabharata is a wonderful work (*Mahābharatamāscaryam nirmame bhagavān munih*). In Arya Sataka, the poet says :

'I adore that language of Vyasa which comes without effort and is the quintessence of worldly knowledge, the ornamental gesture and eloquence of which is borne by the goddess of wisdom (the Muse).'

It is said that Vyasa engaged Gajanan as his amanuensis at the time of composing the slokas. Gajanan used his own tusk as the style for writing to Vyasa's dictation. The Bharata is treated as the fifth Veda (*Bhāratah pancamo vedah*) and it is also styled as Karshna Veda, with a rich collection of legends which serve as parables and are purely of a didactic nature, the truths expounded therein being eternal. Whenever any sacred work is taken up for study, the practice in vogue is to offer salutations to Narayana and Nara (the two manifestations of Brahma in the *svāyambhuva manvantara,* who conducted penance in a hermitage at Badari and who descended as Arjuna and Krishna in the Dvapara age), Sarasvati and

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Vyasa, with a view to attain success in their undertakings. (*Nārāyaṇam namaskṛtya naram caiva narottamam. Devīm saraswatīm vyāsam tato jayamudeerayet*).

Vyasa had no issues for a long time. After severe penance, it is stated that he had a son in Suka that celebrated Jnani and rigid observer of continence. In the Brahma Vaivarta Purana, the *parampara* or chain of Acaryas is given. From Vasista was born Sakti and from him sprang Parasara. Parasara's son was Krishna Dwaipayana.

'Vasiṣṭasya sutah saktih sakteh putrah parāsarah.
Parāsarasutah sriman kṛṣna dwaipayano harih.
Vyasaputrah sivāmsasca sukasca jnāninām varah.' (*Brahma Khanda*).

Through the grace of Vyasa, Samjaya, the charioteer of the blind Dhṛtarastra was able to secure for himself the divine vision and hear the Supreme and excellent Yoga (Cf. B. G. XVIII-75).

To Vyasa is ascribed the authorship of the Bhagavadgita which in turn is the essence of the Bharata (that lamp which is filled with the oil of Bharata ignited with the fire of knowledge). The various strands of Upanisadic thought were systematised by Vyasa in the form of aphorisms styled Brahma Sutra. This great work is also known as Vyasa Sutra. Some ascribe its authorship to Bhagavan Badarayana. One of the smrtis is also ascribed to Vyasa. The conception is that Vyasa is a deathless person (*Ciranjivin*). Vyasa belongs to that class of sages who are styled as Maharshis in that seven-fold nomenclature.*

Vyasa was the dominating spirit which gave direction in the building of a high standard of ethical and moral values in that heroic age which followed the age of the Spirit, based on the four fundamental ends of existence (*Purusarthas*) — *Dharma, Artha, Kama* and *Moksa* which constitute the *Sanatana Dharma.*

The Vishnu Dharmottara lays down that in iconographical sketches, the figures of Vyasa should be black with a slender body and *jata* (matty hair) of tawny brown colour, with the four disciples (*four acaryas*) seated on his sides.

Four full-moons are held sacred in the Hindu Year (which fall in the months of Vaisakha, Asadha, Kartika and Margasira) and they are styled Vyasa Purnimas. Devotees sit up in meditation after this great preceptor. The full moon of Asadha is considered to be the Jayanti of Vyasa. Recluses take up to austerities on this sacred day and continue for two months for observing the *Chaturmasya vrata* (four fortnights) which generally synchronise with the rainy season. They give directions to the disciples and perform the functions on the foot prints of that great luminary Vedavyasa. The Purana says that there can be no austerity that could equal the concentration of one's devotion to Sambhu, Vishnu and Vyasa — that scion of Satyavati.

'Tasmai bahgavate nityam namah sāntāya dhimate.
Pārāsaryam mahātmānam yoginām visnumavyayam.'

'I offer my constant salutations to that noble ascetic, who is tranquil, the son of Parasara, is of good understanding (intellect), is immutable and manifests himself everywhere.'

* The others are Paramarsis like Bhela, Devarsis like Kanva, Brahmarsis like Vasista, Sruta risis like Susruta, Rajarsis like Rtuparna and Kanda risis like Jaimini.

The doctrine of the Sankhyas is that one should stand aloof or disassociated from objects of the senses. That Yogin who is freed from attachment and pride, who transcends all pairs of opposites such as pleasure and pain, heat and cold, etc., who never yields to anger or hate, who never speaks an untruth, who though, censured or struck still shows friendship for the slanderer or the striker, who never thinks of injuring others, who restrains these three, viz. speech, acts and mind, and who treats all creatures equally, succeeds in approaching the presence of Brahman. — *Mahabharata,* Shanti Parva.

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THERE IS NO SPIRITUALITY WITHOUT HUMANITY

SWAMI VIMALANANDA

A proper assessment of the situation in which mankind finds itself today must open our eyes to many neglected values which alone can stave off causes of conflict and accelerate peaceful national development and genuine international understanding. Love of knowledge and desire for social betterment brought humanity to the present stage of civilization. Individual effort and corporate achievements are behind the progress of human culture. The instinct of curiosity and the spirit of adventure have always found expression in the activities of man. History is a record of individual and collective achievements which are closely interrelated in every step of cultural advancement. It may be the exploration of unknown regions, negotiation of unclimbed peaks, unusual act of bravery, or some kind of sacrifice that brings about a distinctive result. Behind the advancement of science and technology one will notice such a spirit of heroism often working in a silent and persistent manner.

In the vast field of science and technology, first comes for mention the production of nuclear weapons of unprecedented lethality. They are guardedly produced and secretly tested in large numbers by U.S.S.R. and U.S.A. The launching of the sputniks and artificial planets by the Russians followed by travel in outer space several times round the earth in a short period and the attempts made by the U.S.A. to launch vanguard satellites and baby moons are now matter of common talk. Apart from these spectacular inventions of the Space Age, there are other really fruitful achievements and discoveries scattered in less known scientific reports. They are signalised by suitable awards made by States and academic bodies. All of them register the rapid progress made by science and technology during the year. Machine begets machine and knowledge begets more knowledge; the passage of time has revealed a phenomenal growth of both.

The idea of converting atomic energy for peaceful purposes has gained some momentum and has also received concrete expression in some shape in the recent past, although that is of little significance compared to the enormous sums of money and labour spent in turning nuclear energy to military ends. However, Scientists in many countries have shown a greater awareness to the need of preventing science from acquiescing in its own destruction by the highly destructive weapons it has produced. The advance of scientific technology has, however, not helped much to order the life of mankind more scientifically.

The political climate of the world still remains in the doldrums. Mutual distrust among nations divided into opposing camps and subtle victimization of the weaker by more powerful nations continue to be causes of irritation. Powerful nations believe that one sword keeps another in the scabbard. The tug-of-war between the top powers for the gain of greater striking potency has not suffered any relaxation in spite of the protest of public opinion in different parts of the world. Thus in the teeth of disapproval expressed by lovers of world peace, the question of disarmament and abandonment of nuclear tests remains unchanged.

The political condition in a vast region, divided into many small and big independent States having different historic antecedents and divergent alignments which enable them to erect defence structures with foreign economic and military aid is bound to be mercurial, especially when powerful outside nations find an interest in one or more of these States either out of economic self-interest or out of a desire to use them to counter-balance the mounting military potential of their powerful rivals. The disputes, frictions or revolutions

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in various countries are all the result of a clash between the spirit of newly rising nationalism and an old political order which can no more be sustained as indicated by the force of events in Africa and Asia.

Political forces work either for unity or disunity as they are oriented. But they have a dynamism, especially in the modern period of history, which is hardly paralleled by any other kind of human activity, chiefly because of the economic factors that lie behind them. By the impact of modern civilization there is an unprecedented awakening and activity among peoples who have been lying dormant for centuries quite oblivious of their economic and social potencies. Nations like individuals see only what they are told to see. The mere presence of natural resources, such as mountains, rivers, minerals, and manpower, cannot certainly be a cause of man's learning to use them. The universalization of knowledge by science and technology has brought underdeveloped countries within its orbit, with wonderful effect.

Even in a country like India just entering on a new era of economic and industrial expansion and achievement there has been a general advance in the field of science, engineering, industry, and commerce as seen in the inauguration of Rajasthan canal works, erection of steel plants, execution of river valley projects, trade and transport agreements with other countries, new scientific achievements in the national laboratories, and the like. India has further placed herself among the scientifically advanced countries more clearly by the introduction of the metric system which makes use of the computational advantages of the decimal system. India's attempt at economic recovery through successive national plans is appreciated particularly because it is not the type of planned economy envisaged by some other governments through State compulsion and regimentation, which, of course, implies the absence of free press, institutions of self-government and normal contact with the outside world.

Another phenomenon that has appalled demographers, economists and politicians of the present time is the increase of the world population by 47 million human beings each year. If this rate is maintained, the present world census figure of 2737 millions will be easily doubled in a quarter of a century. In Asia and Africa there is an equally high rate of birth and mortality. In Latin America, on the other hand, a high birth-rate is related to a low mortality rate. On the whole, the present population trend is believed to be the result of a fall in the death-rate in many parts of the world. India records the lowest life-expectancy, of only thirty years, and the Netherlands has on record the highest life-expectancy, seventyone years for male and seventyfour for females. The problem arising from a high life-expectancy and low mortality rate is aggravated by two factors having grave political and economic significance. These are : (1) the concentration of people in cities which are growing amazingly in number and size, and (2) the barriers created by rigid nationalism obstructing free immigration to regions where natural resources are abundantly available.

The history of mankind is a multiple palimpsest concealing many layers of past records. What is said in the above paragraphs happens to be what one can read on the surface. The conclusion which it yields is not very different from what one may have formed by a reading of past historical writings. Neither the quantitative increase of the human species on the surface of the globe nor the multiplicity of human contrived novelties of production, distribution, consumption and destruction have made any fundamental change in the laws of human behaviour. The credit and debit columns remain materially the same as in the previous pages of history, although votaries of applied science might underline the credit entries and students of social sciences might query the debit record, all depending upon the angle from which one sees things.

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Mass observation reveals that man is a compound of social and anti-social elements as long as careful education and training have not steadied his steps in the path of honesty, manhood, and good fellowship. The traits of human personality appear in the nationality of racial, linguistic, religious, and political groups as if through a magnifying glass. The saying that a people gets the government it deserves is naturally followed by the corollary that a government reflects the people it represents. The perfections, or distortions and maladjustments, of human personality are reflected in nationality also. Men compete for profit, honour, and dignity ; so, too, do nations. Men compare themselves with other individuals and find no satisfaction till they come to possess what appears to them eminent. Nations also emulate and even enter into rivalry with other nations with a view to surpass them in civil and military achievements. Men cherish the notion that they should reform, change, or convert others to what they wish them to be or in a manner advantageous to the reformer. Nations also want to influence other nations (as we find, for example in the religious medieval states and modern communist nations) in order to impart to them their own impress and ideology.

If men are indifferent or hostile to strangers, nations also develop an anti-foreign instinct at times as the ancestry of words like alien, pagan, kafir, and mlecha reveals. Men are prone to form in-groups and out-groups or home-groups and other-groups ; nations, too, do the same under pacts and treaties. Ethnocentric individuals are unwilling or unable to appreciate the standards and points of view of other social groups ; nations that have the most restricted external relations also reveal at times the same trait. Men can represent other men in favourable or unfavourable light as suits their purpose. Nations, too, do the same through the elaborate machinery of propaganda. Human nature is suspicious of the unfamiliar ; naturally nations that prefer isolationism are also objects of suspicion. Men expect from others advantages which they are not prepared to grant them when they in turn expect the same ; often nations also do not deviate from this habit.

Self-love makes men partial to themselves, so, too, national self-consciousness leads nations to be partial to themselves especially when a conflict arises between human rights and national rights. Men are not found unwilling to get the better of others when some service or pleasure is to be bought. Nations, too, behave similarly in the division of material advantages on the earth. Bad nature, passion, and revenge inflame men to inflict most brutal punishment when they are free to do so. Political passions excite nations too, to override the limits of national and international contracts and even good sense, at times when nothing hinders their course. If the number of individuals who take pains to know and speak the truth are few, failure to adhere to plighted word, indulgence in diplomatic double speech, and crooked dealings can be pointed out in the dealings of nations also in plenty. What is characteristic of the nation marks out also the religious, social and political parties within the nation, which claim sharply divided loyalties. The difficulties to be surmounted by all those who sincerely aim at universal human brotherhood and international accord are therefore many. The words of the scripture put the cure for the ill in the simplest form. 'Eschew evil and do good : seek peace and ensue it.' But it is the hardest thing man has found to fulfil. Peace is not for the rash or the impulsive or the impatient individuals or nations.

Just as personality is not a sum of disvalues, nationality, too, is not the total of negative traits. The national sentiment can and should be a moral force in the world, if it is nurtured by correct idealism and emotional fervour. Usually nationality is the product of common history, language, literature, religion, personality and government. If the first four attributes of nationality are purified and mutually understood and appreciated among nations, difficulties created by difference in the national personality and government will be minimized

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to a large extent. This can become more effective and fruitful when the desire for participation in the cultural streams of other nations become a voluntary impulse within the individual nations themselves. This can be realized only when a more penetrating sympathy is generated among the nations by a deeper understanding of the best in their own cultures. Further this will act as a cure for the morbidity of certain types of nationalism.

Mere patriotism becomes inadequate for any nation today; complete abandonment of every kind of rancour and bitterness in all human relations must be the target of all education in every country. Children of any nation brought up to appreciate the dignity and responsibility of conscious living cannot be susceptible to lies and half-truths propagated by national self-interest. A penetrative sympathetic insight into the common good is at the root of good citizenship and co-operative progress within a nation, and these form the *sine qua non* of mutual understanding in international relations. Today where the economic level of life is above squalor and poverty, youths are often behaviouristically controlled by political groups and ideologies that breed sharp and fast divisions on the one hand, and on the other, they are hypnotised by dress, films, competitive games and other sources of pleasure. The chances for them to be temperate, magnanimous, just and self-controlled are sometimes choked by circumstances; and where social inertia and want of resources have submerged millions, nationality itself is hardly evolved. The republican form of government is the highest form of government, but until the highest type of men are evolved that form of government is riddled with dissensions. That is why in many countries it has been tried and replaced by, or mixed with, military leadership.

Society starts with parents and ends in common universal brotherhood. There are many stages in the course of its development and nationality is one such stage which cannot be over-leaped. Just as civic virtues are but an extension of domestic qualities, so, too, national character is only a higher denomination in the same scale of values. Inter-personal virtues developed at home are not nullified by civic virtues, nor do domestic virtues come in the way of the development of civic virtues. So also nationalism which has its *raison d'etre* in the development of the welfare and virtues of a state, in the reform of its institutions, and in the development of its persons, should not come into conflict with universal human brotherhood and international beneficence if the citizens who constitute the nationality have a genuinely broad education. If the force of reason and common human nature can triumph over the provincialisms of narrow nationalism carved out by certain traditions of common interest, habits of common thought and action, and changing economic interests, it is not impossible to bring about a greater appreciation of international unity and harmony in class, group, and community relations. The greatest need for this mutual change is particularly felt today because of the tension mankind is experiencing, as has been shown here in the early paragraphs. 'None can be perfectly free till all are free; none can be perfectly moral till all are moral; none can be perfectly happy till all are happy.' The great truth tersely expressed in these words of a great writer comes upon us with an unprecedented force today because mankind is physically brought together closer than ever before. Let the golden link of love — a love that is not a desire or passion, but a seed principle and a spiritual force — unite the hearts of men and minds of nations mutually so that conflict and strife be reduced in the individual and also in the relations between nations. The herb that is hard to get can alone bring relief.

Men are a thousand times more intent on becoming rich than on acquiring culture, though it is quite certain that what a man is contributes more to his happiness than what he has. — SCHOPENHAUER

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A NOTE ON HASTAMALAKASLOKAH

B. H. KAPADIA

Among the various schools of Indian philosophies the position and the glory of Vedanta Philosophy is unique. Śankarācārya stands at the head of these eminent Advaitins. Among the galaxy of his eminent disciples Sureśvara, Maṇḍanamiśra, Toṭaka [1], Hastāmalaka, etc. are stars of first magnitude. Hastāmalaka is as genuine a disciple of Śankarācārya as Totaka and others are. The poem of Hastāmalaka is known as Hastāmalakaślokāḥ. Does this name not sound as queer! It is a poem of 14 verses. The title can be explained in two ways : (1) the verses of Hastāmalaka or (2) verses which are as clear as an āmalaka placed on the hand. It is probable that the second explanation is the more original one and the name of the author, Hastāmalaka, has been derived from the compound of the words composing it.

Hastāmalakaślokāḥ consist of 14 verses. The first and the second stanzas of the 14 verses contain the question 'Who are you?' and the remaining verses give the answer. These two verses are composed in the Indravajra metre having the scheme — — ◡ — — ◡ ◡ — ◡ — —. In this poem the phrase

"स नित्योपलब्धिस्वरूपोऽहमात्मा'

is repeated eleven times in stanzas 3 to 13. This compound constitutes the core of the Monistic philosophy of apperception (S. Bh. 2. 3. 40) and the disciple gives in eleven verses the answer to the question 'Who are you?' The answer is couched in double sense. Once metrically and literally in which the wording of the sentence (स नित्योपलब्धिस्वरूपोऽहमात्मा) and its rhythm — — ◡ — — ◡ — — is supplemented by a quarter of Bhujaṅgaprayāta metre and the second one in which the contents of the thoughts are clarified and clothed in an imagery. Thus, there springs forth a poem with all the conventionalities of imagery from the monotony of the rhythm and contents. Without giving up its terminological covering, philosophy here takes the form of a poem.

These verses are ascribed to Hastāmalaka. Often even to the great Śankarācārya. There are two commentaries written on this poem and one which is entitled as Vedāntasiddhāntadīpikā should have been composed by Śankarācārya.

The relation of Hastāmalaka with Śankarācārya is as valid as Śankarācārya's relation is with Toṭaka. The poem appears to be completely in the spirit of Śankarācārya. Only the identifying of the Ātman with Viṣṇu in verse 14 and the probable allusion to 'Ānanda' in verse 1 gives scope to the doubt that the work cannot spring from Sankara.

The legend told about Hastāmalaka in Sankaradigvijaya is pure phantasy, lacks historical evidence, as it is composed long after Śankarācārya. Tradition takes Hastāmalaka and Toṭaka as the younger disciples of the great Śankarācārya. But it is not corroborated by texts ascribed to them. If we were not to give importance to the genuineness of the names then we ought to set aside the legends to which tradition lends great weight. They are the direct pupils of Sankara since the ideas represented by them stand in closest proximity to the thoughts of Sankara, and lack in the characteristic signs of later Advaita.

Prabhākara whom Sri Sankara met on his march through the country, had a son who was deaf, dumb and imbecile. He was of 13 years. He was as it were Jaḍa in popular parlance. For, all that which is not Ātmā, is Jaḍa, e.g. the body. On being ques-

[1] Totaka's only work is Totakāṣṭaka (of 8 verses) couched in Totaka metre.

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tioned 'Who are you?' one naturally answers with reference to his body, caste, social position, etc. But, all these arrangements are concerned with the body in which the Ātmā is encased. 'I am Jaḍa' from this angle. Prabhākara's son is thus Jaḍa (like every human body) but his self is the purest Ātmā. When he was taken to Śankarācārya and when he heard from him the usual question 'Who are you?', he at once recited the Hastāmalakaślokāḥ. In one of the verses the idea is expressed that the speaker (i.e. his real I) is not Jaḍa and gave a positive reply in 11 stanzas that follow. Thereupon, Śankarācārya took up the exciter of curiosity as his disciple (cf. Sankaradigvijaya, XII, 43-62).

The 14 verses of the Hastāmalakaślokāḥ when rendered in free English would be :

(1) Who are you? O child, Whose? Where will you go? What is your name? This is asked by me, O sweet child, for my delight, tell me, you who are the enhancer of my joy.

(2) I am not a man, nor a god, nor a Yaksa, I am not a Brahmin, a Ksatriya, a Vaisya, nor a Sūdra. Nor am I a celibate, I am not a house-holder, I am not even an ascetic residing in the forest, I am one whose real essence consists of enlightened awakening.

(3) That which is the cause in the functioning of the mind, eye, etc. as the Sun is the cause of the activity of the world at large ; similarly, I am that Soul, which has discarded all the limiting adjuncts, which is of the nature of Ether (Akasa) and whose real nature is perpetual enlightened awakening.

(4) Mind, eye, etc., which are not endowed with awakening carry on their activities having resorted to that one Atma, which is motionless and whose essence like the heat of fire is perpetual enlightenment. I am that Atma whose real essence is perpetual enlightenment.

(5) Just as in a mirror the reflection of the face is perceived but there is no entity distinct from the face, similarly, the soul is the reflection of the Cit in the intellect. I am that Atma whose real essence is perpetual enlightenment.

(6) Just as in the absence of the mirror there is also the absence of the reflected ; but, there exists only one face devoid of lucubrations, similarly, that one is devoid of reflections in the absence of the intellect. I am that Atma whose real essence is perpetual enlightenment.

(7) That one which is devoid of mind, eye, etc., still which is the mind of the mind, eye of the eye, and so on, that one whose real essence is incomprehensible to the mind, eye and other senses, that one whose real essence is perpetual enlightenment, that soul am I.

(8) That One which shines of its own accord is of pure mass of knowledge. Even though its nature is light, still it appears diverse in diverse intellects just as the one Sun reflected in the water of the earthen pots appears as many. I am that Atma whose real essence is perpetual enlightenment.

(9) Just as the Sun, an illumination to the innumerable eyes, does not illumine the objects in any order (but simultaneously), even so that One is enlightenment to innumerable intellects. I am that Atma whose real essence is perpetual enlightenment.

(10) Just as the eye comprehends the objects illumined by the Sun and not otherwise so the Sun too illuminated by that One illuminates the eye. I am that Atma whose real essence is perpetual enlightenment.

(11) Just as the one Sun appears innumerable in the moving waters but the same in the steady waters appears as only one, the one whose essence is not illumined by others, (The Atma) is different in diverse intellects but is only one in the true wise ones. I am that Atma whose real essence is perpetual enlightened awakening.

(12) Just as a highly foolish person having his eyes thickly covered, or when covered by the clouds considers the Sun as devoid of lustre, similarly, that One which appears bound to a person whose sight is clouded by nescience, am I that Atma whose real essence is perpetual enlightened awakening.

(13) The one which pervades the entire class of objects but is not contaminated by

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the entire class of objects. He is like the sky always pure and serene. I am that Ātmā whose real essence is perpetual enlightened awakening.

(14) Just as in the real jewels there is diversity of the limiting adjuncts, similarly, that also is diverse in the diversity of the intellects. Just as moon's light has fickleness in the water so also there is fickleness of you, Vishnu, in this worldly existence.

Hastāmalaka in the 14 stanzas explains the real nature of the soul by means of homely images. He clarifies the real nature of the Ātmā by means of the *bimbapratibimbabhāva*. The reflected images are not real but the entity that is reflected is real. The thousands of the reflected images of the Sun are unreal as the shadow, but the one that is reflected is the real one. The Sun is real but not his reflected images. The only one Sun appears as many in changing waters but really it is one as can be seen when reflected in the steady water. The japākusuma and the diverse objects that are placed before the reflecting object are diverse but the entity in which they are so reflected does not become contaminated by the qualities of the objects that are to be reflected. The Sun covered by the clouds is not devoid of lustre merely because a foolish person cannot see the Sun. Similarly, the Ātmā covered up in the case of the body, cannot be truly perceived, but that does not mean that the Ātmā is not a reality behind this covering. Thus, we find, that in many of the stanzas the imagery of the reflected and the reflector is made use of to clarify the matter in hand.

Let us go from stanza to stanza. The first line of this poem contains like the beginning of the *Upadesasāhasrī* (Gadya I. 9) the question of the master about the origin of the new disciple. But, whereas in the *Upades.* the pupil gives the false answer as he speaks with reference to his earthly descent, he here answers it correctly. Here he denies himself as a body etc. i.e. he denies that the four castes and the four stages of life belong to the soul since all these arrangements are for the body. In the last line of the second verse there follows the positive answer. I am i.e. my soul is of the state of real enlightened awakening. (*Bodha = avagati = anubhuti = Atman* etc.). In others words, *I am Brahman.*

With the words indeed I am the well known (*suprasiddham*) the person questioned alludes to this, that the true essence of the one who questions, is the inward soul of every one who has realised that. The last line of the first verse मत्प्रीतये प्रीतिविवर्धनोऽसि (for my delight, you who are the enhancer of joy) points to the *Ananda* character of the Atman. When the questioned rightly answers declaring himself as the Atman, then it is meant that the objectless joy which is the Atman is one's self.

We would make an attempt to collect together the important doctrines that are alluded here. The Atma is without any limiting adjuncts (*Upadhi*) and although pervades through all the objects (cf. Padmapada's *Aparoksata* theory) still he is untouched, not contaminated by the objects, like the space (3, 13). Its essence, real nature is knowledge (*bodha*) (2, 4). Its Ananda nature is not referred to in the verse that gives the answer. It is the *causa materia* for all the objects (3, 4). It illumines everything (10). The individualised soul is its reflection, its reflected image, which cannot exist without the prototype. But that Archetype can exist without the image (5, 6). Through this metaphor the individualization of the soul is explained (8, 11, 14 l. 3-4). It is also explained even by the theory of limitation. The inner mind is the limiting adjunct of the Atman (14 l. 1-2). The spiritual is the same for all the knowing subjects of all times and of all places (9), is without change (4). The change and the wanderings are ideas only with regard to the inner mind (11) the soul appears to change only apparently (14). The nescience is the prime cause inasmuch as the illuminated Atman does not come into appearance as it is, in reality.

Only in the last verse the 'I' form of the whole answer is relinquished and the author

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implicitly identifies the Atman with Vishnu. This is so characteristic of the Advaitin who ignores the difference between the personal God and the impersonal Absolute. How all of a sudden in the last stanza, the impersonal god is identified with Vishnu! Can this be, only with the intention of following the traditional way of invoking blessing from the Almighty? Vishnu from the root 'Vis', to enter, thus means pervades by entering the bodies of the objects of the phenomenal world. Just as the one Sun being reflected in the waters of rivers etc. does not in reality become diverse, similarly the Atman, who is encased in the bodies of entities is not many in reality; but, as a matter of fact, is one without the second, like the Sun. Thus, to conclude from the above discussion of the Hastāmalakslokah we can state that by means of Advaitic phraseology Hastāmalaka gives expression to his ideology, about the highest reality and at the same time he clarifies that this body may be *jada* but not the soul which is encased in it. Such an answer is bound to make a favourable impression on anybody's mind who is sensible to higher thinking.

MULTI PATTERN MOSAIC IN THE 18 FACET GITA JEWEL

(Continued from the previous issue)

V. B. ATHAVALE

G. 7. 12-15 give the relation between 'bhāva', 'guṇa', 'daivi maya' and 'asura bhava'. 12th tells that 'satvika', 'rajasa', 'tamasa' 'bhavah' arise from the 'atman', but it never gets involved in them, but remains always aloof. But G. 14. 20 tells explicitly that the 3 'gunah' (qualities) arise from the physical body.

The intrinsic difference between 'bhāva' and 'guṇa', that 'bhavah' originate from the 'atman', while 'gunah' originate from the physical body, is very significant. For, the physical body being perishable, the 'guṇah' also perish. But 'bhavah' rise from the 'atman' and also merge in it, and so they do not perish with the decay and death (jara, marana) of the body. The pun on the word 'guṇa' is worth noting down. Guna means the chord, tying the bow. The bow string is formed by twisting 3 sinews together. 'Satva', 'raja' and 'tama' are the 3 strands which constitute the chord, and G. 14. 5 says that this three-fold string ties the imperishable 'dehi' in the body. The word chord can be used for the 'bhavah' also, for, it means the sound produced by a vibrating chord. Just as sound is an intangible effect of a tangible chord, similarly we can say that 'satvika', 'rajasa' and 'tamasa' bhavah are the 3 intangible effects of the tangible 'gunah'.

G. 7. 13-14 say,

'tribhih gunamayaih bhavaih mohitam sarvam jagat

daivi hi esha gunamayi maya.'

The 3-fold 'bhavah', which develop into 'gunah' later, are the original source of the delusion in the whole world (earth and heaven taken together). It is called '*daivi* gunamayi mama maya'. It is necessary to note down here, that Gita maintains an intrinsic difference between '*daivi* gunamayi prakriti' and '*asuri* gunamayi prakriti'. G. 9. 12 defines '*rakshasi and asuri* prakriti'. Empty hopes, empty deeds, and empty wisdom. The ego in the man transforms the normal 'daivi wealth' into demonical or brutal lust for physical enjoyments. It will be clear from this that 'bhava' is a subtle manifestation of the inner faculties, which become concrete in the physical body at a later stage.

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Let us try to ascertain the exact meaning of 'bhava' first. 'Asa' and 'bhu' are the two basic verbs in Sanskrit, which mean to be and to become respectively.

Sat and bhava are the two nouns derived from these verbs. By adding the prefix 'a', we get the words 'asat' and 'abhava'. G. 2. 16 gives a relation between the four words. 'Sat' means existence, 'asat' means non-existence. 'Bhava' means value and 'abhava' means no value. 'Sat' can never be without value, while 'asat' can never have any value. G. 17. 26 uses the words 'sad-bhava' and 'sadhu-bhava'. They mean reality and goodness. G. 8. 6 gives an interesting relation between the predominant 'bhava' at the time of death and the 'gati' of the 'jiva' after leaving the body.

We shall now consider the meaning of the words 'swabhava' 'adhibhuta-bhava', 'bhutanam-bhavah'. G. 8. 4 tells, 'adhibhutam ksharo bhavah'. It means that whatever is born, must die. All bodies which are born on this earth, must decay and die. We have seen that the three 'gunas' are associated with the physical bodies only and hence they keep the occupant of the body chained tightly as long as the body exists but no further.

G. 8. 3 tells 'swabhavo adhyatma uchyate'. It means that the 'bhavas' which are manifested in the individual as 'swabhava' are supported by the 'atman'. G. 4. 13 tells that the 4 different 'swabhavas' of the 4 'varnas' were created by me 'atman'. G. 18. 41-45 expand this statement that 'brahmana', 'kshatriya', 'vaishya' and 'shudras' are doing their individual duties which are guided by their 'swabhava' their natural tendency to do the work in the human society. This normal tendency is called 'niyata karma' in G. 3. 8, 'shariram kevalam karma' in G. 4. 21, 'swabhavah tu pravartate' in G. 5. 14 and 'swabhava niyatam karma' in G. 18. 47. It means that the work is directly controlled by 'atman' and hence it does not matter whether it is 'satvika', 'rajasa' or 'tamasa'. For instance, 'nidra' (sleep) is 'tamasic'. It has defects. On the other hand it is necessary to keep the body fit after a full day's work. Similarly hunger and thirst are 'rajasa' but they are necessary, because the food and drinks satisfy them, and nourish the body.

This 'swabhava' of a normal adult human being, is called in the 10th chapter as 'vibhuti' or 'bhutanam bhavah' or 'atmavibhutayah', i.e. the manifestation of the powers of the 'atman' through the 'bhutah' (created human body). G. 7. 4-6 tell how the 'bhutah' get born, 'earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, reason and egoism is the eight-fold division of the inferior type of the powers of prakriti'. The life element working inside the inferior 'prakriti' is called the superior (jivabhuta) prakriti. G. 15. 7-9 tell the details of the way in which the 'jiva' creates for itself the human body in this mortal earthly world, for the enjoyment of the objects of the senses through the mind, intellect and ego, which form the subtle inner body.

G. 10. 4-5 'reason, wisdom, non-illusion, forgiveness, truth, self-restraint, calmness, pleasure, pain, existence, non-existence, fear, courage, harmlessness, equanimity, contentment, austerity, alms-giving, fame and obloquy. These are the 20 bhavas' manifested through the mind and the intellect. G. 15. 16. There are two 'purushas' (powers) in this (human) world, the perishable and the imperishable (kshara, akshara). The physical body forms the perishable part and the internal subtle 'bhava-maya' portion is the imperishable part. We shall see how Gita connects this 'akshara purusha' with 'atman'. G. 7. 8, 'Paurusham nrishu' (the virility among men). G. 8. 4, 'Purushascha adhi-daivatam'. Purusha is the source from which all the 'daivi' (shining) faculties arise. G. 17. 3, 'Shraddha mayo ayam purushah' (the faith of a man determines his inner character). The faith arises from 'swabhava' — 'adhyatma' hence 'swabhavaja-karma' — 'swadharma' — 'sahaja-karma'.

The central theme of the 8th Ch. is to specify the total accumulated effect of the activities of the individual at the time of the departure of the subtle body, by leaving the

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physical body on the death bed. This is called the 'gati' of the individual. G. 18. 12 tells that the gati of the 'jiva' can be of 3 types, good, evil, or mixed. G. 17.14, 15 and 18 say that the predominance of the 'satva guna' leads the 'jiva' to higher plane, 'rajoguna' keeps him in the middle and 'tamo-guna' leads the 'jiva' to the lower evil grades. But G. 8. 7 and 14. 19 maintain that if the mind and intellect powers of the 'jiva' are directed towards me (antaratma) at all times, he will understand that the 'gati' is associated with 'gunah' only. So the 'jiva' detaches himself from the 'gunah' and merges in me.

Now we can turn to the set 6+6+6. G. 6. 5 tells *'Uddharet atmana atmanam, na atmanam avasadayet'* and the last verse 47 says, *'madgatena antaratmana shraddhavan bhajate yo mam sa yuktatamah'*. G. 12. 6 tells *'ananyenaiva yogena mam dhyayanta upasate'*, and the last verse tells 'those who follow the instructions with full faith and complete devotion reach me'. G. 18. 68 also tells that those who give this Adhyatma-jnana secret to my devotees will reach me.

Now let us turn to the set 5+5+5+3. The central topic of the 5th ch. is the verse 21,

'bahya sparsheshu asaktatma vindati atmani yat sukham
sa brahma-yoga-yuktatma sukham akshayyam ashnute'.

The central topic of the 10th ch. is the meditation of 'atma-vibhutayah'. Verse 20, "The primary notion 'I' which arises in every heart is a manifestation of the 'atman' and the meditation on this primary experience of every one, will lead to the same goal." Ch. 15. 17 identifies 'Purushottama' with 'paramatma' and advises in the last verse that every one can try to know him and thus attain perfection. G. 18. 36 tells that by constant practice one can attain 'atma-buddhi-prasada'.

Now let us turn to the set 4+4+4+4+2. The main theme of the 4th ch. is the verse 34. 'Jnana-yajna' is far superior to 'dravya-yajna'. Hence the last two verses of the 4th ch. tell that one can become 'atmavan' by removing doubts through 'jnana'. G. 8. 14 tells that constantly keeping the mind merged in the Atman is the easiest way to reach me. We have already discussed about the others.

Let us take the set 3+3+3+3+3+3. G. 3. 17 tells that the final aim of all activities is to be 'atma-rata' 'atmatripta' and 'atma-santusta'. The rest are already discussed.

We can now consider the 9 sets of 2 chapters in each. We have seen that 'dwandwa moha' and its complete removal by 'Adhyatma jnana', is the central pivot of the Gita teaching. The first chapter gives a graphic description of the actual effect of this 'moha' even in the valiant Arjuna and how it was removed by Krishna by administering the dose of 'Adhyatma jnana'. The effect of 'tamas' is first seen in the organs, then in the 'prana', then in the 'dhriti' and then in the intellect (medha). G. 18. 35 gives the sequence, 'dreams, fear, grief, despair and vanity'. We shall see how Vyasa has depicted these sudden changes in the original valiant attitude of Arjuna, by using harsh or soft consonants or a change in the metre to suit the occasion.

The valiant speech of Arjuna begins in the verse 21 and ends in 23. He orders Krishna to wheel the chariot between the two armies, so that he could gaze on the warriors, arrayed to help the wicked minded Duryodhana. The predominance of hard consonants indicate the harsh tonal emotions of a warrior, ready to chastise the wicked. Krishna executes the orders of the master of the chariot, like an obedient meek servant and asks Arjuna to have a look of the opponents.

Verse 28 depicts a sudden change of the valiant emotions into those of deep pity and dejection. 29 and 30 describe the effect of 'tamas' on the organs and 'prana'. 31-35 describe the effect on the mind like the whirling, seeing bad omens (bhrama, swapna, bhayam) and distorted interpretations. The verse 36 gives a peculiar distortion, *papam eva ashrayet asman hatva etan atatayinah,* 'Only sin will be added to us if we kill these desparadoes.' The 'dharma' tells *atatayinam ayantam hanyat eva avicharayan.* The desparadoes must

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be killed without loosing a single moment in thinking about it. In 38, Arjuna calls them *'lobho apahata chetasah'* yet he censures the Pandavas for overlooking the sin of 'kulakshaya'. The verses 40-44 describe the imaginary fear of the whole family going to hell, on account of the death of the heroes in the war and their wives going astray later.

The verses 45-47 show his clouded intellect had taken the perverted decision of laying down his weapons and allowing the enemy to kill him (*adharmam dharmam iti manyate*). We have seen that 'shoka' and 'vishada' are the third and fourth stages of the 'tamasi' 'dhriti'. The 5th and the last stage 'mada' (vanity) is depicted in the next chapter. Thus the first chapter ends dramatically with the pathos emotion, which are grief and despair. Grief produces tears in the eyes and despair dislodges the courage in the heart.

The reason for shifting 'mada' (vanity), the last phase of 'tamas', to the second chapter, is that the despondency cannot turn into vanity unless some one else rebukes the person. As Sanjaya was on the battle field, and he had seen this temporary phase of Arjuna, the opening verse of the 2nd chapter is by Sanjaya. Verses 2 and 3 form the rebuke by Krishna. Arjuna is denounced as a 'kliba' at a wrong moment. We know that Arjuna had assumed the role of eunuch (kliba) in the Virata town, but at the time of the 'gograhana' campaign, he had fought like a warrior. Krishna is referring to this past episode. This rebuke dried the tears of grief and transformed the wailing heart to expressions of vanity.

Verses 4-6 indicate a retort of Arjuna. 'How can I shoot arrows towards the feet of Bhishma and Drona, which deserve worship with flowers from our hands. It would be better if we beg our food than kill these revered persons and enjoy the kingdoom smeared with their blood. Further we are not sure weather we can get victory.'

Verses 7-8 depict the collapse of this short lived vanity and the admission of Arjuna as follows :

'Karpanya dosho-pahata swabhavah, pracchami twam dharma sammudha chetah
yat shreyah syat nischitam bruhi tan me, shishyah te aham shadhi mam twam prapannam
na hi prapashyami mama apanudyat yat shokam ucchoshanam indriyanam
awapya bhumau asapatnam riddham rajyam suranam api cha adhipatyam.'

In these two verses, Vyasa has skilfully introduced the technical words and problems which daily confront the common man and he is in search of a solution out of the difficult situation. The technical words are : 'karpanya', 'swabhava', 'dharma sammudha', 'shreya', 'shishyah', 'prapannah'. G. 4. 34-35 tell that the seers will impart wisdom to a disciple, only if the disciple bows down and requests him to solve the difficulties. This wisdom is sufficient to remove the doubts completely.

The dramatic change in the attitude of Arjuna, is worth noting down here. Arjuna, who had ordered Krishna to bring the chariot between the armies, is now bowing down to the servant and requests him to be the master and he was ready to obey his commands. The master has become a servant and the servant has become a master. The central question that was tormenting Arjuna was, that if he took part in the war, he may either get success or be killed in the war. If he is successful, he will still feel the torment that he had killed the revered teachers. If he dies in the battle, he may go to the heavens but still his mind will be worrying about the fact that he had wounded the revered teachers, who had no ill feelings towards him. Arjuna told Krishna that he had decided not to fight and became silent.

The reply of Krishna to the questions raised by Arjuna start from the 11th verse. The verse 10th tells that the tone of the reply was derisive (prahasan iva). The reason was that Arjuna was arguing like a learned pandit prior to the submission. Hence 11th says, 'You are talking like a Pandit but weeping like a fool.'

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Thus it will be clear that the sequence of the verses (47) in the 1st chapter and 11 verses in the 2nd are planned by the great Maharshi Vyasa. It would be wrong to interpret them as questions asked by Arjuna at random and Vasudeva answering them carelessly and avoiding some awkward questions.

We can now turn to the sequence of the other verses in the 2nd chapter. In verse 39, Vyasa says *'eshā te abhihita Sankhye buddhih'*. So long (11-38 verses) I have told you the 'Sankhya' mode of thought. But now listen to the 'Yoga' mode. G. 18. 12-13 and 19-39 are the direct quotations from the old 'Sankhya shastra'. It means that the argument in the 28 verses is borrowed from the earlier literature. G. 10. 26 refers to 'Kapila Muni', who was the originator of this 'Sankhya system'. The word 'karpanya' in G. 2. 7 is taken from Brih. Up. 3. 8. 10. *'Yah atmanam aviditwa praiti sah kripanah'*. Verses 25-30 end with, *'na twam shochitum arhasi'*. It shows that the argument was to remove the anguish in his intellect.

It means that Vyasa begins his 'Yoge buddhih' argument from the verse 39. G. 3. 20 tells that this 'karma yoga' method was used by Janaka and others in the past. G. 4. 1-2 tells that this 'karma yoga' was known to Rajarshis like Vivasvan and others in the past, but it was lost on account of the vast time gap, and it is being revived now.

(*Concluded*)

ALAMBAZAR MATH

And the Inception of the Vow of Service

(*Continued from the previous issue*)

SWAMI AKHANDANANDA

Upendranath Mukhopadhyay

In my declining age I may find no opportunity to insert the following topic in Smritikatha. So I would like to note down here something about Upendra, an old devotee of the Master, and the famous founder of Basumati Sahitya Mandir (a famous newspaper and publishing house in Calcutta). When he came to visit the Master at Dakshineswar the latter one day pointed at Upendra, seated in the room filled with devotees, and said, 'This boy comes to me with a desire to have some money.'

Upendra had a small book stall at Battala near Baishnav Basak's book-shop, on the western side of the road. As I went to purchase religious books I saw in Upendra's stall copies of books like *Ramagita, Jnanasankalani Tantra, Uttaragita.* Upendra had a monopoly in the sale of the poet Surendranath Majumdar's *Mahila, Barshabartan, Sabita Sudarsan* and other works. Numberless were the copies of books like *Barshabartan* and *Sabita Sudarsan* that I took from that shop. After he had come in contact with the Master I saw a large Tamal tree near their house at Ahiritollah.

Let me say here something about the devoted service rendered to Sadhus by Upendra. Immediately after the passing away of the Master some of our Gurubhais, including Swamiji and myself, went out in a desolate condition on some days from Baranagar Math and came to Kankurgachi. From there we went to the doors of the householder devotees of the Master, uttering, as we walked, *Wā Gurujikiphate* — Victory to the Guru. At last at about eight at night we reached, hungry and tired, the small shop of Upendra and he invariably refreshed us with a basketful of various sweets and packets of betel. There was a hackney carriage stand by the Beadon Square, the drivers there shouted 'Baranagar, Kasipur, four pice'. Upendra hired those carriages pay-

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ing from his own pocket. Many were the days when he thus fed us and paid our carriage hire. Jnanananda Avadhut (Nityagopal) then stayed at Ramdada's house. Every afternoon he came to Upendra's stall, remained sitting in a dark inner room and left it late at night after taking his supper.

Six months after the disappearance of the Master in 1886 I left Upendra in the aforesaid condition. Three years later when I met Swami Sivananda in northern India I heard from him that Upendra had an access to unthought of prosperity within these years. He was now a moneyed man. His monthly, *Jnānānkur* had an extensive sale. In this monthly was published serially Swamiji's *Isānusharan* (a Bengali rendering of the *Imitation of Christ*). But fortune favoured him through that single book, *Rājbhāshā*.

I have said how Upendra loved to amass money. His pecuniary condition improved through the grace of the Master and as a result of his devotion to Sadhus. Swamiji would say, 'See, how Upen has fared? From Upen's case one can see how readily devotion to Sadhus produces good fortune.' After his return from America he said one day, 'Upen has a fine business-head.' I was then there.

It is known to all how, through the Master's grace and Upen's merits, that business has flourished now in the hands of Satish Chandra (Khoka), Upendra's only son.

Hariprasanna (Vijnanananda)

When we were at the Alambazar Math, Hariprasanna was the District Engineer of Etah (N.W.P.). Subodhananda, while out on his travel, came to Etah and stayed with Hariprasanna for some time. Subodhananda knew how hard up we were at the Math. He told Hariprasanna of this and persuaded the latter to help the Math with Rs. 60 a month. As the Math received this help regularly for some months its wants were met to a considerable extent during the period.

After Swamiji returned from America Hariprasanna made a provision for the education of his younger brother and the maintenance of his mother and himself joined the Math. Our Math was then at Nilambar Babu's garden to the south of the present Belur Math.

Swami Brahmananda

Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda) was mostly put up at Balaram Babu's house in Bagbazar. Yogananda would not leave him. One day I suddenly came from Alambazar Math to Balaram Babu's house and said to Maharaj, 'Please come to stay for a few days with us at the Math.' He consented. At Alambazar Math we would be in the same room. In his company we spent a few days in great joy.

Sudhir and Krishnalal

Sudhir (Suddhananda) then often came to the Math. Krishnalal (Dhirananda) too did so. He then stayed with Yogananda at the Holy Mother's residence and served her.

Cheats in ochre dress

One day, after our noon-day meal we, Ramakrishnananda and others, were engaged in conversation, when a troop of sorcerers from Banaras, dressed in ochre and displaying a feat of swallowing Salagram (a round stone, emblem of Vishnu), came up. They wore ochre-coloured Alkhallas (cloaks), parted at the chest and thick like carpet. They had in their hand Kamandalus (Sanyasi's bowl), of 'Daria Narial' (marine cocoanut). On coming up to us they, with their right hand stretched, blessed us saying, 'Brahmananda, Yogananda, Premananda, Akhandananda, Ramakrishnananda....'.

I recognised them and asked, 'Well, where did you pick up those names?' Ramakrishnananda gave me a slight push and signed to me to keep silent. But as I spoke to them a few words in correct Hindi they realised their trickery would not hold water and they took their leave. After they had gone Ramakrishnananda said, 'We could have enjoyed great fun if they had stayed longer.'

Let me give here some particulars about this class of pretentious sadhus. Their main

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haunt is at Banaras. In their throats they make cavities to conceal small pebbles and gradually they are made big enough to hold Salagrams. As necessity arises they bring these out and send them again there. They come to a householder's residence and bring out Salagrams from their mouth. As an offering to the deity they eat good things to their heart's content. From outside they learn the names of three generations of the householder and telling him these strike him with awe. Next they would perhaps foretell that in a month the householder's life would be in peril from a snake-bite. Naturally the latter gets nervous. Then comes the assurance, 'Why fear? Just pay me some twenty rupees, you shall have an amulet and I shall worship Kashi-Biswanath (Lord of the world — presiding deity of the holy Banaras) with Ganga water and bel leaves and your life will be saved.' With this they place some vermilion on a bit of paper and move it for sometime. Forthwith there appears a proverb on the paper in Devanagari (Sanskrit) script. The householder, overwhelmed with anxiety regarding his future calamity, which of course never happens, is struck with awe. He readily pays them the money demanded. The proverb was surely written on the paper with the gum of Akanda (an Indian plant), as vermilion is thrown and the paper is moved, the characters become distinct. They have many such tricks to cheat the people.

I learnt afterwards that these very people had been to Swamiji's house and spinning some such yarn swindled from his mother ten rupees.

Secret charities of Swamiji

Sasipada Bandyopadhyay (father of Sri Albion Rajkumar Bandyopadhyay, civilian officer of Madras) was the founder of the Widows' Home of Baranagar. He often came to the Math. He talked of Swamiji and enquired about him. I also often went to Sasi Babu's Home. Many widows had their education there and did household work. At the Home there was a school for girls and the widows were the teachers. The tender-hearted Swamiji would send money from America to the destitute families he remembered. He sent more than a thousand rupees to a householder to release his residence from a mortgage. He gave some help to charitable institutions like the one described above. He did not forget to send a contribution to Sasi Babu for the Widows' Home of Baranagar. We had enough proof from Sasi Babu of the joy all felt for the real help they got from the liberal Swamiji who made no invidious distinction between creed and creed. People do not know how many were benefited by such pecuniary help from Swamiji. One day I heard from Sasi Babu that he had in his possession Raja Rammohan Roy's hair and sacred thread. I went to his Home and had a touch of the thread and a tuft of hair like that seen in the Raja's portraits. It was in that Home that I made my first acquaintance with Sri Bipin Chandra Pal.

Dr Turnbull

At this time Haramohan Mitra, a friend of Swamiji and a devotee of the Master, brought an American gentleman, Dr Turnbull, to the Alambazar Math. It was Haramohan who, under the pseudonym of S. C. Mitra, first published in the form of booklets Swamiji's Chicago Address and some other addresses. Guided by advertisements Dr Turnbull came to Haramohan at Nayanchand Dutt Lane to purchase those booklets and requested Haramohan to take him to the Math. Haramohan did so. We sat spell-bound to hear from the gentleman an account of Swamiji delivering speeches at the Chicago Parliament of Religions and many other things.

On his first visit the gentleman stayed three or four hours at the Math. He found joy in talking with us. He had put up at an hotel in Calcutta but now he wanted to be lodged near the Math. I arranged that he would stay at the garden house of Rai Prasanna Bandyopadhyay Bahadur of Ariadaha. From the Math there was a short cut to that house.

When I went to the garden-house, the gentleman would read to me Longfellow's poems and

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I taught him from Ramakrishna Bhandarkar's Sanskrit grammar.

It was about two or three months before Swamiji's return to India that the gentleman said that he would go back home after Swamiji's return. Every day he came to the Math from the garden-house after 10 a.m., had his meal there and went back after seeing the evening Arati (service by waving lighted lamp and other things).

What joy had we to hear from him of Swamiji's influence in America and of his unprecedented reception there! We had it from Dr Turnbull that on some days after his speech hundreds were eager to shake hands with Swamiji. There was such a rush for a touch of Swamiji that many a lady had her dress torn. The perfect nonchalance with which Swamiji confronted the fierce attack and thundering of missionaries of different churches and the ease with which he refuted their arguments surprised all. He never lacked patience in listening to his adversaries. With a smile on his face he heard everybody and gave suitable answers.

Day after day we heard countless such stories about Swamiji. Turnbull's amusing stories concerning America gave us a great deal of joy. I have forgotten many of them. Let me here tell one such story of Turnbull.

Two American gentlemen came to London at the invitation of a wealthy friend. The first thing the friend showed them in London was the Parliament House. At that they said, 'Our Congress House at Washington is far bigger and much better than this.' Seeing the St. Paul's Church they remarked, 'It can ill compare with a church in our country.' Thus wherever they went in London and whatever they saw they never failed to indulge in boasting about their land. Then the London gentleman took them to Italy. One night in Italy excessive indulgence in wine laid them flat. In two cots they were carried to a solitary graveyard. The English gentleman waited at a distance to observe what they did after they woke up. The loneliness of the graveyard was visible in the faint light of a small lamp. After they had come to themselves they woke up and looked about as they rubbed their eyes. They then shouted, 'Here is the Day of Judgment! Hurrah for the Stars and Stripes! America is the first to wake up!' The London gentleman could not help owning defeat.

A Bengalee missionary, after he had returned from the Chicago Parliament of Religions, was led by envy and jealousy to calumniate Swamiji for nothing even from Bombay. Everywhere in Calcutta he tried to slander Swamiji. Just then Dr Turnbull came to our Math. He wished to taste Bengali dishes. One day we took him to a devotee's house where he took his meal. Another day at night we were invited to a dinner at the Simla residence of Suresh Babu, a distinguished devotee of the Master. We took Dr Turnbull with us. There came Sri Bholanath Pal, Head Master, Hare School, as a guest. As he and other guests at Suresh Babu's house heard of the praises of Swamiji from Turnbull's mouth they requested him to address some meetings. Then from several platforms in Calcutta and Ariadaha Dr Turnbull spoke of Swamiji's extraordinary genius and his honour and immense influence in America and thereby gave a fitting reply to the false calumny of the malicious missionary.

Turnbull was an astrologer. He studied the Master's horoscope and opined, 'He is the Saviour and Light-bearer of the world.' This conclusion after his scrutiny of the Master's horoscope gave us immeasurable joy.

Afterwards, at Gopal Lal Seal's garden-house in Cossipore, Swamiji had a group photograph with Mother Sevier, some Guru bhais on two sides of her and some devotees such as Alasinga, G. G., seated on chairs and himself standing behind Mother Sevier. In that photo Dr Turnbull can be seen standing.

A few months after Swamiji's return to India Turnbull went back to America and took up editing the *Threshold Lamp*, a monthly published from the city of Chicago. Later while at Sargachi I received some issues of the magazine.

(To be continued)

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NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

The article on Sri Ramakrishna is adapted from an address delivered by Dr K. C. K. E. Raja, Vice-Chancellor, Kerala University, on the occasion of the birthday celebration of Sri Ramakrishna, at the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Trichur, in April 1961.

Sri Loku Gehani is from New Delhi.

Dr P. Nagaraja Rao, who has written in these columns previously also, and who was till recently in Dharwar is now in Mercara.

Sri M. V. Sridatta Sarma, is from Mysore.

Swami Vimalananda is the President of Sri Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, Kalady, Kerala.

Dr B. H. Kapadia is from Vallabh Vidyanagar, Kaira.

SANSKRIT AND THE NEED FOR ITS REVIVAL

Sanskrit is the mother of most of the Indian languages and many others have drawn their sustenance freely from it. It was once the measure of our culture and the banner of our civilization. The accredited scriptures of the Hindus, the Vedas, are in that language, the Itihasas and the Puranas which are the commentaries and explanations of the truths embedded in the Vedas are also in Sanskrit. Our ethical codes too are written in that tongue. It covers a wide range of subjects like law, medicine, chemistry, engineering, military organization, politics, economics etc. conducive to the life of a progressive nation. It is not merely the language of the pundits and the religious. In it we find a most perfect language capable of expressing easily the most abstruse philosophical truths as well as the most scientific ideas. The term 'Sanskrit' itself means, the 'Refined', the 'Perfected' and this name suits it admirably well. It is the queen among languages. It has a tough code of grammar which can frighten the bravest of hearts. Yet it has attracted students who have dedicated their whole lives to its learning. Western savants like Max Muller and Paul Deussen took great pains and spent a life's fortune in its study and translated the thoughts expressed in those wonderful books, the Vedas, into their languages. These ideas now have revolutionised the thought current of the West. The West found a philosophy in the Vedas which could stand its ground in the face of the latest scientific researches and the severest tests of logic.

Yet such a rich language, such an extraordinary heritage of ours has been neglected for more than two centuries now. The result has been that whatever it stood for, culture, ethics and religion have begun to disappear from the land. It may be pardonable and understandable that we were not able to do anything when we were under foreign rule, but it is a matter of regret that even after independence Sanskrit, the 'soul of India' did not receive proper attention in our country, not to speak of the pride of place it deserves. Why should not the country after such a long spell of foreign domination enrich itself by tapping this invaluable source of inspiration? Is there any logic in merely copying Western models in all the vital matters of our national life and in throwing our rich cultural heritage overboard? The nation stands to loose much by adopting this suicidal policy.

It is all the more paining that some States actively manifest their opposition to Sanskrit and for this folly and impudence we are paying dearly. The seeds of disintegration that were sown by the formation of linguistic States have already commenced to sprout and we have had some of the worst riots in the

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name of linguism. Each State thinks itself as an independent entity and never thinks of the nation as a whole, because we have forgotten our common culture and common heritage. In spite of all the differences in the languages and customs Sanskrit held India together by its unifying force, but with its disappearance the bond has loosened, and the country is falling to pieces. The true worth of Sanskrit was assessed recently by one of the great sons of India, Dr Rajendra Prasad. Inaugurating the All India Sanskrit Sahitya Sammelan on 2nd July 1961 he stressed the importance of Sanskrit in unambiguous terms, which are worth noting by all Indians who have the interest of the country at their heart. Some extracts from the address are given below :

> 'Sanskrit was not merely a language, nor its literature a mere collection of works of Sanskrit scholars and writers. Its real importance lay in the fact that it was through Sanskrit that they could see the soul of India.'
>
> * * *
>
> 'If one wanted to understand the mode of Indian life, the original source of our religious rites and the way of Indian thinking, one had to turn to Sanskrit literature. In other words, the history of Sanskrit language was nothing but the history of the development of "our nation and our social activities".'
>
> * * *
>
> 'Sanskrit has been able to bind together culturally all the inhabitants of this vast land in which there have lived people speaking different languages and adopting different ways of life for thousands of years. There have been changes from time to time in the social structure of the people of this land and there have been also changes in their angle of vision but no revolution could loosen the ties by which Sanskrit language has kept us togegether.'
>
> (report : *Hindu,* Monday 3rd July 1961)

No comment is needed on the learned and considered opinion expressed herein. It is now the duty of not only the Government but of the public too to help revival of Sanskrit. As a binding force we need it now more than ever.

It is encouraging to note that some private bodies have already taken upon themselves this onerous task of spreading the study of Sanskrit ; the attempts are really laudable. But unless Sanskrit receives equal if not more, encouragement as is the case with science, commerce and other subjects, the study will be confined to a limited circle. Today almost every University has arrangements for the study of Sanskrit but few students utilise them. The reason is obvious, a Sanskrit graduate has less material prospects than any other. Unless he has some godfather to pull him up he has no semblance of a chance to get a decent living. Who can dare to take such risk ? Can we blame the students if they fail to respond ? The rich want to become richer and so will not turn in its direction. Whereas others cannot afford to take the risk of starvation or meagre living. So there is the stalemate.

This stalemate should be broken and every one has to do his duty without waiting for the other to make the move. The private enterprises can help a lot in this direction, we do not mean in the shape of money alone. They can entertain such candidates for employment as have knowledge of Sanskrit as an additional qualification. This we are sure will give an impetus to learning of Sanskrit.

Further, India today is not an isolated country, it has connections with almost all nations of the world and it has cultural missions established in many countries. Who then will represent its culture truly ? It may strike any casual observer that those who have to represent Indian culture inside the country and outside, both in the public and private sectors, are sure to do injustice to our motherland and its culture if they do not make a thorough study of Sanskrit. Every ambassador or secretary of the Foreign Service and employees of that Department at all levels as well as employees of all non-governmental bodies who are expected to spread Indian culture in India and outside should study Sanskrit in order to gain competence to correctly represent our culture here and abroad, for Indian culture is

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not simply a hotchpotch of what came to the country in the name of culture during the last 200 years.

The onus of propagating Sanskrit therefore to a large extent lies on the national Government. It has to actively support the cause of Sanskrit and in the interest of the unity of the country take steps to promote its study even from the primary stage, in education. India and the whole world stand to gain substantially if Sanskrit is not neglected at all, by the children of the soil.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE CONCEPT OF MAN: A STUDY IN COMPARATIVE PHILOSOPHY: Edited by S. Radhakrishnan and P. T. Raju, George Allen and Unwin Ltd. Pp. 383. Price 42 Sh.

This book is an attempt to understand the individuality and dignity of man and his place in the cultural traditions of the world and discusses the status given to man in the Indian, Chinese, Jewish and Greek traditions. Prof. Raju in his introductory essay argues that in comparative philosophy man is the common denominator and hence the criterion in the evaluation of different types of philosophy and religion is man himself and his values — the whole and complete man in all his various aspects and environments. Philosophy should deal with all the various aspects of man like the material, ethical, social, rational, religious, cultural and so on. It should not confine itself to any one particular section. Man everywhere is essentially the same in spite of the differences in his religion, culture and environment.

Prof. Wild writes on the concept of man in Greek thought and discusses the school of the Sophists founded by Protagoras which emphasised exclusively man and his problems. He then takes up the teachings of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle in this context. The Jewish thought is stated in detail by Dr Heschel of the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York. He discusses such problems as the meaning of existence, the need of God, Man being the symbol of God etc. and quotes from the Bible in support of his statements. The Jewish piety, he states, in the form of a supreme imperative; Treat thyself as an image of God. He emphasises the concept of *Mitsvah*, i.e. the carrying out of a sacred deed which gives meaning to human existence in spite of man's constant corruption. Mitsvah is contrasted with sin. W. T. Chan of Dartmouth College, who writes on Chinese thought states that whatever cult a Chinese may profess, he is a humanist and to him man is the measure of all things. He then gives us an account of the teachings of Confucius and Mencius in this connection. These teachings along with Lao-Tze and the Buddhists taught that all men have in their nature a perfection and sagehood — only these have to be carefully developed.

P. T. Raju deals with the Hindu concept of man in a comprehensive way and beginning from the Vedic culture he passes on to the Upanisads and finally traces the influences of the religious sub-sects like those of Saivism, Saktism, Vaisnavism and so on. He then takes up the question of the place of man in Jainism and Buddhism and gives a rapid survey of the treatment of man by some of the schools of Indian philosophy. The last chapter is very important in which the editor brings to a focus all the important contributions made by these cultures. He argues that these conceptions are not hostile but complementary to each other. Philosophy, first and last is the philosophy of life and man must be made the center of all philosophy. This new standpoint must arise and establish itself; in this all truths and values have to be integrated with emphasis on their reference to man.

The book under review is an earnest attempt in this direction and as such will be widely welcomed by all serious thinkers. A genunie understanding of the view points of the various different societies makes for integration of all humanity under a common programme. Books like the 'Concept of Man' will hasten the advent of that goal. The book is also a valuable addition to comparative philosophy which has recently come into importance.

S. RAJAGOPALA SASTRI

LIFE DIVINE: Published by Sri Sita Ramanama Sankirtan Sangham. Sri Ramanama Kshetram. Guntur. Pp. 88. Price 40 nP.

This little book recounts the mighty splendour of Ram Nam, which is a luminous gem to be

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installed on the threshold of the tongue at the doorway of your mouth'.

An account of the life and the last days of the founder of the Sri Sita Rama Nama Sankirtan Sangham, makes stimulating reading.

S. RAJAGOPALAN.

FRENCH

INTRODUCTION A L'ASIE: By Jean Herbert. Pub. Editions Albin Michel, 22 Rue Huyghens, Paris. P. 696. Price 27 NF.

Introduction to Asia by M. Jean Herbert is an '*introduction*' only in name. It is really a sumptuous treatise giving an engaging survey of the whole of Asia through a study of the life of her peoples down the centuries of her long history. The author has shown his characteristic genius for getting to the root of things in every subject by rightly approaching the panorama of the multi-tiered civilizations of Asia through the portals of her Religions. For, more than any where else, the life of all communities in Asia is touched and oriented at every point by the beliefs and practices of the religion to which they belong.

M. Herbert is very fair in his account of the part played by the different religions in Asia and has no false scruples in calling a spade a spade. His narration of the activities of the early Christian missionaries in their zeal for conversion of 'heathens' is very amusing and at the same time instructive. He underlines the Universalism common to the major non-semitic religions on the continent and contrasts it with the narrower spirit of proselytising religions elsewhere. In the Second Part of the volume the author launches upon a profound discussion of the development of Asian thought under chapter headings of Time, Space, Causality, Logic and Symbolism. In the chapter on Symbolism he treats with a wealth of detail and reference, the subjects of Myth, Language, the different powers of the Mind and above-mind etc. The sociological developments take up a large part of the book in the Third Part and the last and Fourth Part deals with the Economy, Legislation, Education, Science and Art of the miniature universe that is Asia.

Unconsciously one tends to compare this work with another on the same subject that appeared two decades ago viz. *Inside Asia* by John Gunther. The present publication is of a different genre altogether. It is more profound, comprehensive and reliable. M. Herbert has truly seen the *Inside* of Asia however modestly he may title his work. This is the kind of book which should be published in all the major languages of the world under the auspices of the U.N.O. to promote the much-needed understanding between the East and the West.

M. P. PANDIT.

NEWS AND REPORTS

VEDANTA SOCIETY OF PORTLAND, OREGON U.S.A.

REPORT FOR 1960

The Society was started in 1925 by Swami Prabhavananda. After a short suspension it was reorganized in 1932 by Swami Devatmananda and is now under the leadership of Swami Aseshananda. It is located in its own home, the Vedic Temple, 1877 S. W. Park Avenue, Portland 1. Phone: CApitol 3-1688.

Two Sunday services and weekday classes on the Upanishads and the Bhagavad-Gita are held regularly with increasing attendance. The festival of the Divine Mother and the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda and Swami Brahmananda were observed with worship, Homa ceremony, and prasad in Sri Sarada Hall. The birthdays of Lord Krishna, Buddha and Jesus, as well as Easter, Good Friday and the New Year's Eve vigil brought many sincere people to the Temple.

The Society has a lovely mountain Retreat, a 120 acres of wooded land, known as the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama. Its temple overlooks the fertile Columbia River Valley. Sunday morning services are held here during the summer months attracting friends from the nearby farming district in addition to the Portland congregation. Following the services the Swami answers questions at an informal gathering on the lawn. Some of the members have spent their vacation at the Retreat enjoying the respite from city life the peaceful atmosphere affords.

During the year, Swami spoke at the First Unitarian Church, the First Christian Church, Lewis and Clark College, Portland State College and the St. Helen's, Oregon Kiwanis Club. At Willamette University in Salem, Oregon, the Swami was guest speaker for the weekly chapel

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hour. His talk on the Hindu View of Christ was well received. The Swami spoke at the annual celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday in the Seattle Center, taking part as well in their annual symposium. During August, Swami Aseshananda was a guest of Swami Nikhilananda at Thousand Island Park where he spoke of his reminiscences of Holy Mother and held a class on the Upanishads. In New York City he was the guest speaker for the opening service of the Fall season of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center and he also spoke to the devotees of the Vedanta Society.

During the Swami's absence from Portland, Christian Ministers and a Jewish Rabbi were guest speakers.

Swami Vividishananda of Seattle made his annual visit to Portland, speaking on Sri Ramakrishna's Birthday celebration here.

Morning and evening meditation and noonday worship continue as before and are well attended. Library services have been extended and new books purchased. The Swami continues personal interviews for members seeking his assistance in their spiritual growth.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH, MADRAS-4.

Birthday Anniversary of Swami Ramakrishnananda

The Ninety-ninth Birthday of Swami Ramakrishnananda was observed on the 9th August, 1961, in the Math. The function started with Arati in the Shrine followed by singing and chanting of the select portions from Gita and Upanishads by the boys of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, and Durga-saptasati, Gita and Vishnusahasranama by the Sadhus. In the Shrine elaborate worship was performed along with Arati and Homa. Nearly 1000 devotees attended the function and took prasad. About 750 Daridranarayanas were also fed.

In the evening after service in the Shrine, Swami Suddhasatwananda, Swami Paramatmananda and Swami Kailashananda spoke on the life of Srimat Swami Ramakrishnandaji Maharaj to the gathered devotees.

On 13th August, 1961 the Public Celebration started with Harikatha at 3 p.m. on Bhakta Kanaka Das by Sri Srirangam V. S. Venkataramana Rao. The meeting started at 5-30 p.m. with the Hon'ble Mr. Justice G. R. Jagadisan, Judge, High Court, Madras in the Chair. Swami Kailashananda welcomed the president and the speakers. Dr N. Subramaniyam, M.A., Ph.D. of the University of Madras spoke in English. He stressed on the unique devotion of Swami Ramakrishnananda both when the Master was in the physical body and later in the worship of the Master's portrait as the Master in the living form. Swami Sarvajnananda speaking in Tamil said that Swami Ramakrishnananda was an invaluable gift of Sri Ramakrishna to the world. His open and frank heart which reflected in the replies that he gave to Sri Ramakrishna on his first visit endeared him to the latter and showed his readiness to be cast into any mould the Master liked.

In the presidential address the Chairman dwelt on the need of more such religious leaders with genuine love for God for guiding humanity at the present juncture. With a vote of thanks proposed by Sri K. Balasubramania Iyer, M.L.C. the meeting came to a close.

After the evening service in the Shrine, there was Bhajan for about an hour in the spacious hall.

CORRECTIONS

1. In the June, '61 issue, page 123, in the article on Rani Rasmani, in place of the sentence 'They were fishermen (Kaivarta) by caste' please read as: 'They were Mahishya by caste' as the Rani belonged to the 'Mahishya' and not the 'Kaivarta' caste. We regret the error.

2. In the July issue, page 157 (in Ramakrishna Vivekananda Institutions in Central and Western India) please read: '*Sri Ramakrishna Kutir, Bikaner*: Started by a group of workers led by Sri Rajagopal Iyengar and Sri Punamchand Tomer of Bikaner, under the inspiration of Swami Japanandaji....' in place of 'Founded by....'.

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.... Be bold and face
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease.
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XLVIII | OCTOBER 1961 | No. 6

FROM THE TREE OF DIVINE LORE

The Rishi said: This Mahamaya is the Yoganidra (the tamasic power) of Vishnu, the Lord of the world. It is by Her that the world is deluded. Verily, it is She, the Bhagavati, Mahamaya who, when propitious, becomes a boon-giver to human beings for their final Liberation. She again, causes the bonds of transmigration. She is the Sovereign over all lords.

She, the Eternal, is embodied as the universe. By Her all this is pervaded. She incarnates in manifold ways; hear it from me:

After conquering all the devas, Mahishasura became the lord of heaven. Then the vanquished devas, headed by Brahmā, the lord of beings, went to Siva and Vishnu and described to them their defeat by Mahishasura.

Having heard the words of the devas, Vishnu was angry and also Siva, and their faces became fierce with frowns.

Then from the face of Vishnu, full of intense anger, issued forth a great light, and from that of Brahma and Siva and from all the other devas too.

That unique light, produced from the bodies of the devas, pervading the three worlds with its lustre combined into one and became a female form.

Honoured by all the devas, offering ornaments and weapons, She, the Devi, gave out a loud roar with a defying laugh again and again. Her unending terrible roar filled the entire sky, and caused great reverberation. The earth quaked and all the mountains rocked; all worlds shook, the seas trembled.

Mahishasura rushed towards that roar, surrounded by innumerable asuras. There he saw the Devi, pervading the three worlds with Her lustre. Making the earth bend with Her footstep, scraping the sky with Her diadem, shaking the netherworld with the twang of Her bowstring, and standing, pervading all quarters around with Her thousand arms. Then began the great battle between that Devi and the enemies of the devas, in which all the quarters of the sky were illumined by the hurling of weapons and arms.

(Devi Mahatmya)

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WORSHIP OF GOD AS MOTHER

या देवी सर्वभूतेषु मातृरूपेण संस्थिता ।
नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः ॥

'Our repeated obeisance to the Devi who resides in all beings in the form of mother.' —*Devi Mahatmya*, 5. 71-73.

The contribution of the East, especially India, to the spiritual well-being of the world is inestimable. At the very outset, we have to acknowledge with gratitude the great contribution of our Rishis, who gave us that grand and universal message, *ekam sat vipra bahudha vadanti*, 'Truth is one; sages call it differently.' A message which shows the breadth of their vision, liberality of their outlook, and depth of their realisations. A teaching that has eschewed parochialism from the Hindu mind. Secondly it was India who acted up to this advice of the sages when she granted asylum to the refugees of religious persecution and allowed them freedom of worship. It was the Hindus again who felt the inadequacy of one ideal for all temperaments and consequently evolved different ideals and different forms of approach to the same Godhead. Worship of God as Mother is one such sublime form of approach.

Antiquity and continuity

It will not be a mere conjecture if we say, here, that in India the conception of God in the Mother-form is as ancient, as the concept of God itself, for, the earliest and first recorded revelations, the *Rig Veda*, bears witness to this fact. Specially the *Devi Sukta*, which is to be found in the tenth Mandala of *Rig Veda*, depicts the Supreme Godhead as Mother. The Mother speaking through the Rishi says that, it is She who wanders in the form of the Rudras, the Vasus, the Adityas, and other Gods; it is She who consumes food, and acts in various other ways through the created beings; it is She again who showers blessings and prosperity on the righteous, raises whomsoever She likes to the position of Brahmā, or makes him a Rishi or endows one with right knowledge and it is also She that destroys the world. In brief, it is She who is the Power behind the Universe, that creates, sustains and withdraws, i.e. controls it in everyway. Proceeding down the corridor of times we observe that the Upanishads too carry this idea. The *Kena Upanishad* for instance, speaks of a resplendent Goddess, Uma Haimavati, who appeared before the puzzled Indra and enlightened him as to the knowledge of Brahman.

A hymn to the Goddess Durga that occurs in the *Mahanarayanopanishad* is very significant in this context.

तामग्निवर्णां तपसा ज्वलन्तीं
वैरोचनीं कर्मफलेषु जुष्टाम् ।
दुर्गां देवीं शरणमहं प्रपद्ये
सुतरसि तरसे नमः ॥

M. N. U. II. 2.

'I take refuge in Her, the Goddess Durga, who is of the complexion of fire and radiant with ardency, who is the power belonging to the Supreme who manifests Himself manifoldly, who is the power that resides in the actions and their fruits and renders them efficacious. O Goddess, adept in saving, Thou takest us across difficulties excellently well. Our Salutations to Thee.'

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This same passage is also found scattered in the *Rig Veda* and in other Vedic contexts. We find this concept fully developed in the puranic works like the *Markandeya Purana* and *Devi Bhagavatam* etc. The *Devi Mahatmyam,* which is reverentially regarded by the Hindus and is daily read by devotees in some parts of the country as a part of spiritual practice, forms a part of the *Markandeya Purana.* Last but not least we have the *Tantras.* The *Shakta Tantras* deal with the practice and philosophy of Shakti worship at great length. All sections in the Hindu fold, worship the Divine Mother in some form or other: The followers of Vishnu, worship Her as Lakshmi, worshippers of Shiva as Parvati or Uma, followers of Kartikeya as Valli or Devayani, and so on, the Divine Mother being considered as the consort or the power of the Lord. There are then the worshippers of Durga and Kali.

Our land abounds in temples to the Mother, so much so that almost every village rightly prides itself in having dedicated a place of worship to Her. Kshir Bhawani in the north in Kashmir, Kanyakumari at the tip of the land in the south, with Vindya Vasini of Vindyachal, Kamakshi of Kanchi, and Meenakshi of Madurai in between are a few of those that need mention. Thus we see that there has been a continuity as well as extensity of this worship of the Divine Mother all throughout the spiritual history of India.

Plausible Reasons

How was it that India alone was able to develop this form of worship? The plausible reasons seem to be (1) the position women enjoyed in the house and society in the days when the worship started, (2) the security the aspirant feels in the natural love and consideration of a mother towards her child, (3) the concept that God creates, sustains and destroys the universe by His Power or Shakti.

Women seem to have enjoyed a high place of honour during the time of the Vedas and even later in the Hindu society. Discrimination between a boy and girl regarding imparting of education must have been totally absent at that time. Women should have been as free as men to opt for the life of *garhastya* (householder) or *sannyasa* (renunciation). Otherwise how can we account for a score or more of women seers that we meet in the pages of the Vedas? How can we account for the intellectual acumen of a Gargi or a Maitreyi of the Upanishads? What was the meaning of *Swayamvara,* — where a girl chose her husband—if she was not endowed with that penetrating intelligence which was to enable her to choose a life's partner. In the Ramayana again we read Sita discussing with Rama the propriety or impropriety of certain actions, with arguments that are quite in keeping with reason. Sita, Savitri, Anasuya and Arundhati have all gained a place of their own, and are the ideals of womanhood of our country. Their names and lives inspire one with awe and wonder.

Further, if we care to look into the now almost neglected, primary instructions to children of olden days, the first thing that will draw our attention will be the words, *matṛ devo bhava,** 'consider your mother as God'. That was the first lesson every Hindu child received. It was with such reverence that every mother was held. Why? Because, it was the mother, who as the embodiment of the tender feelings of forgiveness, forbearance and affection,

* This passage must have been taken from the Taittiriya Upanishad.

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that took care of the physical as well as the spiritual development of her children from the very birth. Thirdly it is an accepted fact that God by His Power or Shakti creates, sustains and destroys the universe. This is also evident from the passages already quoted from the Srutis and such passages from the Gita as:

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति।
भ्रामयन्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया॥

The Lord, O Arjuna, resides, in the heart of all beings moving them, as if mounted on a machine, by His Maya.

Now this word Shakti, which is grammatically feminine in Sanskrit might have helped in the formulation of the idea of God as Mother. But it has a wider content of meaning than meets the ordinary eye. For Shakti in the highest causal sense is God as Mother, and in another sense it is the creation which issues forth from Her womb. So, Shakti, and the Lord are not separate but one entity, like the fire and its burning power. Sri Ramakrishna in this context says:

'The Primordial Power is ever at play. She is creating, preserving, and destroying in play, as it were. This power is called Kali. It is one and the same Reality. When we think of It as inactive, that is to say, not engaged in the acts of creation, preservation, and destruction, then we call It Brahman. But when It engages in these activities, then we call It Kali or Shakti. The Reality is one and the same: the difference is in name and form.'

Consequently, it was natural for the Hindu, nurtured in such an atmosphere to be fully imbued with the concept of worship of God, the Cosmic Energy, as Mother.

Tantras Retrieved from disrepute

As we have already said, this form of worship has been singularly prevalent among the Shaktas. Some forms of disciplines which are prescribed in the Shakta Tantras, however, were difficult of practice except by highly evolved souls. But man being what he is, tried to attain the impossible before equipping himself for the purpose and as it happens in such cases fell from the path, but in order to cover his obnoxious deeds under the name of sadhana, he quoted the *Tantras* as his authority, with the result, the *Tantra shastras* fell into disrepute. It was at this time that Sri Ramakrishna came on the arena and showed to the world the efficacy and purity of worshipping God as Mother. He retrieved the name of the *Tantras* from the quagmire of disrepute, by himself passing through their various practices, at the same time retaining the attitude of a child towards all women, by seeing the manifestation of the Divine Mother in all of them. He never condemned any form of approach to God but insisted that the one as that of a child to its mother, was the purest, safest and best.

Sri Ramakrishna and the Divine Mother

One of the greatest, significant and most salutory contributions of Sri Ramakrishna to humanity in general and to the spiritual aspirants, sadhakas, in particular, at a time when the tide of historical forces was sweeping man off his feet and was making him oblivious of his old moorings, was the worship of God as Mother. His life is a living illustration of this fact. Even as a boy of seven, while he was accompanying a group of women devotees to the temple of Sri Visalakshi of Anur, he became so absorbed in the contemplation of the Goddess that he lost all outer

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consciousness and had to be revived after chanting the name of the Goddess. This fervour of his received a great fillip when later he became the priest in the Temple of Bhavatarini, (Kali) at Dakshineswar. It became his one all absorbing desire and thought to see the Mother. He could not brook any separation from Her, nor any delay. But when even after great yearning he was not blessed with the vision of the Mother, and he wanted to put an end to his life, the Mother granted him Her beatific vision. He thereafter longed only for Her company. What physical troubles and mental torments did he not undergo to obtain it! It is true that he went through different types of *sadhanas* but it is also true that he did so at the command of the Mother. At the end of each type of *sadhana,* not excluding the Advaitic realisation, he was content to remain as Her child. A glance through the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* will convince one of his complete surrender to Her will. For solutions of all his problems She was his only resort. When Narendra said that his visions were fabrications of his mind, Sri Ramakrishna's complaint was only to the Mother. He said in a plaintive tone, 'O Mother, should You finding me innocent play tricks with me.' But when She assured him that his visions were genuine all his doubts vanished, and he reprimanded Narendra for confusing him. Such was the intense faith he had in Her and such was the ardour with which he loved Her. And what was Sri Ramakrishna's experience of the Mother, let us quote his own words:

'My Divine Mother is not only formless, She has forms as well. One can see Her forms. One can behold Her incomparable beauty through feeling and love. The Mother reveals Herself to Her devotees in different forms.'

He also taught how to pray to Her, by his own example. The impact of this teaching of Sri Ramakrishna has begun taking a concrete form today. Wherever his teachings have travelled, whether in the East or the West, people there are genuinely feeling the necessity of the worship of God as Mother. Sri Durga and Kali worships are being celebrated in some parts of America and Europe with as much eagerness and punctiliousness as in India.

Again it is a truism to say that when the Lord incarnates His Shakti (Power) too accompanies Him. In this age when the Lord incarnated as Sri Ramakrishna, His Shakti descended as Sri Sarada Devi. But the life she lived was outwardly so plain that mankind took a great time to understand her divinity and as time will roll on her real identity will be unveiled more and more. Influenced by the account of her spiritual ministry and unostentatious life, lived for the redemption of mankind, many young women have already renounced their homes and dedicated their lives to the service of humanity. But the full effect of her personality is not felt as yet, therefore we can do well to heed the words of advice of Sri Ramakrishna regarding the identity of the Holy Mother. First of all let us remember that it was Sri Ramakrishna in a semi-ecstatic mood who directed his despondent mother and brother to Jairambati to seek for his bride. She was divinely chosen to be the helpmate of the God-man, Sri Ramakrishna. That she was the Divine Mother Herself, Sri Ramakrishna revealed to many a devotee on more than one occasion. He worshipped her on one occasion as the Divine Mother. Lastly Holy Mother's own words which

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fell unawares from her lips bear ample testimony to her Divine descent.

Advaitins too admit the Mother

Sri Shankara, an out-and-out Advaitin, is traditionally believed to have written several hymns in praise of the Divine Mother. That such an exponent of Advaita should have felt the necessity or an urge to eulogise the Divine Mother speaks, in itself, volumes. We cannot dismiss it lightly by saying that it was all written for the sake of people of lesser intellectual grasp, because the devotion that flows uninterruptedly all through those hymns stir the emotions of bhakti in the readers to their very depths and if we have to believe that a lighted torch can only light the smaller lamps, then we have to admit that Shankara was as much a *bhakta* as a *jnani*. We shall give here some hymns from the *Anandalahari* to illustrate our contention. Shankara opens with the verse :

शिवः शक्त्या युक्तो यदि भवति शक्तः प्रभवितुं
न चेदेवं देवो न खलु कुशलः स्पन्दितुमपि ।
अतस्त्वामाराध्यां हरिहरविरिञ्च्यादिभिरपि
प्रणन्तुं स्तोतुं वा कथमकृतपुण्यः प्रभवति ॥ १ ॥

'Shiva is able to project this universe only if He is united with Shakti, otherwise the Deva is not able even to move. Therefore, how can those who have done no meritorious deeds ever strive either to worship or praise Thee, who art worshipped even by Hari, Hara, Brahma and others ?'

The second one runs thus :

तनीयांसं पांसुं तव चरणपङ्केरुहभवं
विरिञ्चिः संचिन्वन् विरचयति लोकानविकलम्
वहत्येनं शौरिः कथमपि सहस्रेण शिरसां
हरःसंक्षुद्यैनं भजति भसितोद्धूलनविधिम् ॥ २ ॥

'Gathering the minutest speck of the dust of Thy lotus feet Brahma has created, this whole universe, which the thousand hooded serpent, Sesha, with great effort holds on his head, while Shiva besmears Himself with it as holy ashes.'

Again :

भवानि त्वं दासे मयि वितरदृष्टिं सकरुणा-
मिति स्तोतुं वाञ्छन् कथयति भवानि त्वमिति यः ।
तदैव त्वं तस्मै दिशसि निजसायुज्यपदवीं
मुकुन्दब्रह्मेन्द्रस्फुटमुकुटनीराजितपदाम् ॥ २२ ॥

'To the devotee desirous of praying to Thee as "O Bhavani, please cast Thy compassionate glance on me, Thy servant," and addresses Thee with the words, "O Bhawani", Thou bestowest on him, before he finishes his prayer, Thy Sayujya, the Sayujya where shine the crowns of Vishnu, Brahma and Indra.'

Further, the Deity that Shankara invoked for worship in the Maths that he established was the Divine Mother, thus leaving no doubt about his reverence to the Mother ideal.

Some incidents that happened only in the last century may enlighten us and help clear the doubts still lingering in our minds. Totapuri Maharaj, the Advaita Vedantin, who initiated Sri Ramakrishna into Sannyasa as enjoined in Vedanta, who never lived under a roof, be it sun or rain, never stayed in any place for more than three days, never believed in the Divine Mother, rather used to say, *maya jhoot hai,* 'Maya is unreal', had of necessity to admit Her existence, when in utter despair of not being able to contemplate on Brahman, due to bodily illness, he tried to drown himself, and yet could not do so. The Ganga seemed as if to have gone dry that night for him. In a flash was torn the thin veil of Maya which made him deny Shakti.

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Admitting the Shakti aspect of God he went away from Dakshineswar after a stay of eleven months. The incidents that draw our attention in this context in the life of Swami Vivekananda, a fiery Vedantin, are his acceptance of the Mother at Dakshineswar during Sri Ramakrishna's time and his experience at Kshir Bhawani in Kashmir. After the latter incident Swami Vivekananda was full of the spirit of the Mother, for several days nothing but the talk about the Mother was to his liking. All of which illustrate that the Advaitins too accept the Mother aspect of God.

Myth and the Human in Sri Durga Worship

The month of October or according to the Indian calendar, the month of Aswija, is the month when the Mother is worshipped with great eclat. The nine nights or the *Navaratri* after the *Mahalaya* are very auspicious for the worship of the Divine Mother, Durga. There is both the touch of the myth and human in this worship. The mythical aspect, according to the Devi Mahatmyam, cantos second to four, is: Mahishasura, a powerful demon conquers all the devas, including Indra and usurps his place and powers of the devas. The devas wander like mortals on the earth having lost, all the rights of enjoying the oblations offered into the sacrifices, to Mahisasura. The devas collectively, headed by Brahma and Shiva, approach Vishnu and relate their deplorable condition and its cause. Vishnu gets annoyed and angered at the audacity of the asuras; from His angered face issues forth a fiery lustre, so too, lustres issue forth from the faces of Shiva, Brahma and other gods. All these lustres merge together resulting in a resplendent female form, infinitely large. All the devas offer Her their weapons to fight and their best possessions as offerings. Coming to know of their predicament the Devi challenges with the twang of Her bow and by Her contemptuous laughter, the demon Mahishasura. Mahishasura accepts the challenge but is killed with all his retinue. The devas offer their respectful gratitude to Her in the form of hymns and She in Her unbounded compassion assures to relieve them and the world of their misery whenever they were in difficulty, and applied to Her for help. This in brief is the mythical portion of this part of the book. The form of the Devi worshipped in this season being Mahishasuramardini, we confine ourselves to this portion.

She is also traditionally accepted as the daughter of Himavan and is supposed to visit him from Her consort's house in Kailasa every year at this time. It is here, that the human touch is felt. A daughter's home-coming is an occasion for a grand fiesta, many an expectant night is spent in reverie and musings as to what to offer to the daughter and how to make her stay comfortable and happy. Every loving father and mother will think of this. The same attitude is kept up towards the Divine Mother too. Songs urging the father to bring the daughter Uma home from Her mad Husband's abode are sung just on the eve of the worship, which lend to the atmosphere a tinge of pathos combined with sanctity. A sadhaka, at this time, is deeply moved and likes to be either still in the contemplation of the Mother or sing Her glories; the anxiety he feels to have the Mother in the house is too sacred to be shared with others not of the same attitude. Such is the stress and strain through which he passes. The three days of the Mother's stay are spent happily away like three minutes and the

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parting day comes. The pang of separation from the Divine Mother is really too great for expression. Mathuranath, the son-in-law of Rani Rasmani and the proprietor of the Kali Temple of Dakshineshwar in Sri Ramakrishna's time, felt it and would not allow the immersion of the image until Sri Ramakrishna blessed him with the vision of the Mother in his own heart.

Significance of the Myth

This is the time when the rainy days have just begun to recede and when as yet the steps of that ice-footed cold have not made their advance, there is a lull, a silence. It is at this time man consolidates his position and gets ready for the fight with the winter days of life. In the Ramayana we read how Laxmana rouses Sugriva from his stupour of indulgence to fulfil his promise for the search of Sita just at this time. In every man's life too come the wintry days of want and desolation, not of the physique alone, not of wealth alone but also of the spirit. Man should be prepared for those days by equipping himself with proper arms, the arms of devotion and discrimination. He should wage war on those demoniacal tendencies of his, that stand in the way of his discovering the Mother, by these arms. This is the time for it and our ancient seers have wisely introduced the worship of that Supreme Power, the Divine Mother to suit the occasion.

It is well to remember that the mythical stories and allegories were not written by the Rishis of old as a pastime or fiction. There was a purpose and that was, to somehow make humanity understand that God alone is to be sought after and that spirituality alone is the true bestower of bliss. So, if we consider these parables and fables silly and reject them without examination, without a little deeper diving, we shall certainly and sadly miss the point they intended to impress upon us. Mahishasura may be a myth but the qualities of Mahishasura we come across in our own being and also in the human world. These bar our progress to the goal of attaining self-realisation. We have to pray to the Mother to remove these obstructions, for no outer agency can remove the dross of our mind except the Indwelling Mother. The Mother, it is said, was formed from the lustre (teja) of all the devas, so in Her all the devas reside and worshipping Her one obtains the fruit of worshipping all deities. Somewhere occurs the famous passage, *tasmin tushte jagat tushtam*, 'when That one is pleased the whole universe is pleased'. The Chandi says:

आराधिता सैव नृणां भोगस्वर्गापवर्गदा।

'She indeed when worshipped bestows on men enjoyment, heaven and final release.'

Significance of rituals

Lastly let us make a cursory study of some of the rituals in the worship. We shall not confine ourselves here to the worship of Sri Durga alone but allude to worship of God in a general way. The first principle in the worship of God is purity of body and purity of heart, followed by sanctity and cleanliness of the place of worship. Then come the instruments of worship and the actual rituals. Many are the obstacles that attend a good resolution or a good work; so an aspirant should conserve his energy for the actual worship and that is why before the puja of the principal Deity is begun, there are rituals for the removal of the different obstacles terrestrial and ethereal, and worship of minor deities. Every obstacle that

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comes in the form of an impediment is pacified and asked to stay away from the place of worship. The body and senses including the mind are purified by *Mantras* and finally the Deity residing in the aspirant's own heart is meditated upon. The devotee here is made to think of his real Self, forgetting about the body. The deity to the Hindu does not reside somewhere in the far off regions, above the clouds, but is very close to him. तद्दूरे तद्वन्तिके तदन्तस्य सर्वस्य तदुसर्वस्यास्य बाह्यत:। 'He is very far as well as near. He is immanent as well as transcendent,' says the *Isavasyopanishad.* Thus meditated as residing in one's own heart She is invoked in a flower, in a pot containing scared water, or in an image and then worshipped by various ingredients.

In the worship of the Goddess Durga or Kali, at the end, comes the sacrifice of the animal. How many even among those who worship Her understand the true significance of it is very difficult to say. The Rishis of old who set this practice were not blood-thirsty beings, neither were they so stupid as to 'cast pearls before the swine', yet their compassion to mankind was too great to contain in their own hearts, the nuggets of gold that they dug out were too precious to be allowed to be lost into oblivion again. Hence they had to attract the human beings by speaking their own language, by appealing to their own instincts and emotions, so that, when by constant meditations on the Deity the aspirants' minds became purer and purer, they themselves could understand the true import of the rituals, including the sacrifice of the animal. It is not the animal in the outside world that we were called upon to sacrifice so much, as the beast in us. Shakti worship is not considered complete until this sacrifice of the bestial tendencies and sacrifice of the selfish motives, are performed. More of our own blood should be spilled in the efforts for the vision of the Mother, than of those animals. That is the true import and that is the true significance of the animal sacrifice.

Conclusion

Recapitulating we have that, the worship of the Mother is very ancient. It is common among all the denominations and sects of the Hindu fold. There is a deep significance for every ritual that has been included in the worship of a Deity, only we have to patiently unravel the mythical veil. Significance of the animal sacrifice is in truth the renunciation of the selfish desires and overcoming of the animal propensities manifest or dormant in our own being. The whole play of the universe is possible because of that Primordial Power (Shakti) being active; Shakti and Brahman, the Ultimate Reality, are identical like milk and its whiteness, one does not exist without the other. Sruti, Smriti and puranas therefore do not mislead us, when they eulogise worship of Shakti, the Divine Mother. May Sri Durga, who promised:

वरदाऽहं सुरगणा वरं यन्मनसेच्छत।
तं वृणुध्वं प्रयच्छामि जगतामुपकारकम्॥
Devi Mahatmya, 11-37.

'O devas, I am ready to grant any boon that is for the welfare of the Universe, so ask it of Me,'

grant us the right knowledge to overcome this round of birth and death.

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AN EVENING TALK BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA*

(We are thankful to Miss Elizabeth Copeland of Sherborn, Massachusetts, U.S.A., for enabling us to present our readers with this report of a lecture, delivered by Swami Vivekananda in May 1894. As far as we know, this report has not as yet appeared in any book.—*Ed.*)

THE EVENING TRIBUNE

Lawrence, Mass. Wednesday, May 16, 1894

LECTURE BY HINDOO MONK

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA TELLS ABOUT THE RELIGION OF HIGH CASTE INDIANS

Library Hall was comfortably filled last evening on the occasion of the lecture by Swami Vivekananda, the noted Brahmin monk, who was a prominent personality at the world's parliament of religions at Chicago last summer, and who is spending some time in this country studying its manners and customs. The lecture was under the auspices of the Woman's Club, and was a novel and interesting occasion. The noted Hindu was pleasantly introduced by the president of the Club, Miss Wetherbee, who alluded to the great antiquity of India, its wonderful history and the high intellectual qualities of the Hindu race.

The speaker of the evening was attired in native costume, namely, a bright scarlet robe, confined at the waist by a long scarf of the same color, and wore a picturesque white silk turban wound round his head. At the first glance one saw the swarthy complexion, the dark and dreamy eyes and introspective manner of a high caste Brahmin, whose life is devoted to religion, and who is also a celibate. That he is a finely educated person, appeared in his wonderful command of English and his power of argument, while an occasional quotation from Milton and Dickens, showed that he was appreciative of the great English classics.

He first spoke of that striking peculiarity of the social condition of the Hindu's caste, affirming that it is not now as strict an institution as in the past, although even now everything goes by heredity. Mixture of castes, though not absolutely forbidden, entails disadvantages on the children. The Brahmin or high caste person devotes the first part of his life to the study of the Vedanta or sacred books and the latter part in meditating on the divinity, being supposed to have overcome the human in himself and to be only a soul.

The speaker did not hesitate to criticize adversely some western customs, especially some connected with the position of woman. He affirmed that we worship woman in the wife, while all women to the Hindu represent the mother element. In America when a woman ceases to be young and beautiful, she has a hard time of it, but in India kings must step aside for an aged woman to pass, so great is the respect in which they are held. He affirmed that some of the most beautiful portions of the Vedas, the Hindu

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Bible, were written by women, but that there was no other Bible in the world in which they had any part.

Considerable time was given to refuting the statement, which he characterized as untrue, in regard to the cruelty practiced to widows in India, the speaker referring in the course of his remarks to the zenana widows, who have been for some time the objective point of Christian missionaries from other countries. Marriage is an institution very safely guarded and, in addition to the law that a Brahmin must not marry a relative, none are allowed to marry who are known to have such a disease as consumption or any incurable physical ill. The strict rules of caste which prevent a person from drinking from the same glass as another, and other kindred regulations, although part of the religion, were excellent in their result on physical condition of a country, with a population of 285 millions, in the prevention of the spread of contagious disease. The speaker was horrified, as he might well be, at the promiscuous water drinking seen in railroad trains and stations in this country. The children are, first of all, taught kindness to all living beings and so thoroughly is this training that the smallest child instinctively turns aside from stepping on a worm. A strange thought that among these so-called heathen there is no need of the Society with the long name which often fails in its mission in Christian lands. The guest of a house, that is, a man who comes to the door and says 'I am hungry,' is God's own image to the Hindu and is treated with the utmost kindness and consideration, being fed before the master and mistress of the establishment.

The speaker alluded sadly to the poverty of his country, for, while the upper caste live in comfort, there are millions whose only food is dried flowers, and who are so low in the scale of existence that they have hardly an identity, and are pitiful objects in the plane of existence. He hinted quite forcibly that food and education would be better than the sermons which Christians and Mohammedans had been throwing at them for the last hundred years. Many of the simple and primitive customs of this peculiar people were told with naivete and innocence that was refreshing in this age when words are used to conceal thoughts. He said there was no flirting and coquetting between their young men and maids, and that the latter did not strut forth into public places with all their bravery on for the purpose of securing a husband, all of which made an inhabitant of this great and glorious republic wonder if something were not slightly rotten in the state of Denmark. It is well to see both sides of the shield in order to be able to decide with an unprejudiced eye, and many of the listeners went away quite puzzled in mind at hearing some of their pet American customs arraigned by a Hindu and a heathen.

The address was a most interesting one and was listened to with deep attention by all present. At the close many were presented to the thoughtful monk, who wasted very few words in social flourishes or unmeaning talk. He seemed much interested in Dr. Bowker, the only one in the audience who had ever visited the strange land which was centuries old before this republic was born.

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RATRI-SUKTA : (HYMN TO NIGHT)

RIGVEDA X. 127

Rishi : Kushika, the son of Sobhari or Rātrī, the daughter of Bharadvāja. Metre : Gāyatrī.

When the divine Night came and looked
with her eyes on many places,
She had put on all glories.
Immortal Goddess, she had filled
the wide regions, the depths and heights,
Restraining darkness with her light.
As she advances, the Goddess Night
sends away her sister Dawn
And darkness spreads to distances.
So, then, come thou to us to-day!
At thy approach we seek our homes
As birds their nests upon the tree.

All people are within their homes
and footed beasts and winged birds,
Even the hawks that wanted prey.
Keep off the she-wolf and the wolf
and the thief, Goddess of the waves!
Make it easy for us to cross.
The black, diffused, permeating
darkness has overtaken me.
Clear it away, Dawn, like debts.
I have brought this hymn like kine
to thee, as to a conqueror,
Accept it Night, Daughter of Heaven!

— *Translated by* ABINASH CHANDRA BOSE.

NOTES

In the worship of the Divinity as Mother, the *Chandi* (a part of *Mārkandeya Purāna*) draws two hymns from the Rigveda — the 'Devīsūkta' (RV. X. 125). and the next but one, the Rātrīsūkta (RV. X. 127). While the Devīsūkta speaks of the Divinity as the power behind the universe, the Rātrīsūkta finds in the tender protectiveness of Night a symbol of the divine motherly grace.

There are many hymns in the *Rigveda* on Ushas, Goddess of dawn, who brings the first glow of daylight (identified with day in st. 3), but this is the only hymn on Night, finding all beauties (st. 1) in her, too, with her stars ('her eyes' — st. 1). To the Vedic poet both are equally holy and symbolise Divine presence. Both represent pure and lovely virginity — they are 'sisters' and each is spoken of as 'Daughter of Heaven' and as a goddess. In another hymn (RV. III. 55) they are described as 'twin beauties', but it is emphasised in a refrain ('Great is the single Divinity of Devas') that they like other Gods and Goddesses symbolise one Divinity.

It is usual for the one Divinity to be symbolised as a male Person and a Monarch. The Devi-worship with the Vedic back-ground shows that, given the poetic and spiritual vision, the one Divinity can also be contemplated through the symbol of natural beauty (*Vibhuti-yoga*) as Mother, as in this hymn.

In st. 6 'the waves' implies darkness spreading in waves like the sea, and hence the idea of 'crossing' it. In st. 7 the plural 'us' changes to 'me' and with this change darkness appears not only physical but also mental from which the poet seeks release (Cf. the *Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad* : 'Lead us from darkness to light'). 'Kine' in st. 8 were the usual presents. Night is compared to a 'conqueror' because she has conquered evil and brought the people safely across the darkness. This strikes the heroic and optimistic note typical of the Veda.

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FROM THE LOWER SELF TO THE HIGHER SELF

SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

Vedanta philosophy speaks of both the lower self and the Higher Self. The lower self is described as unreal but not non-existent. There is a difference between unreality and non-existence. An example of non-existence is the son of a barren woman, or the castle in the air. They do not exist. But the unreal can have an empirical reality : its reality is dependent upon certain conditions, like the dream self. The dream self is real while the dream lasts. Or take the case of the reflected sun in the water. As long as the water in which the sun is reflected exists, so long does the reflected sun exist. It is apparently real. So, too, is the individual self, with which we deal every day in our practical life. But the Higher Self is always real. No appearance or disappearance can be postulated of the Higher Self. There are certain passages in the Vedas that say, when the Truth is known the lower self becomes one with the Higher Self. We read, 'That Thou art'. 'That' is the Higher Self and 'Thou' the lower self. Or, 'I am Brahman'. 'I' is the lower self and 'Brahman' is the Higher Self. Also we read, 'I am He'. 'I' again is the lower self and 'He' is the Higher Self. Vedanta neither denies nor admits the existence of the lower self. It concedes its existence only so long as the condition for its appearance exists.

What is the Higher Self? It is the One without a Second. It is birthless, deathless, changeless, free. It is without beginning and without end. It is described as Pure Existence, Pure Bliss, and Pure Knowledge. In Reality It alone exists. It is called Brahman. I said that the lower self is admitted under certain conditions. The lower self as we know it is identified with a body, mind, sense organs, and it is separate from other sorts. It says, 'I am hungry, I am thirsty, I love, I hate, I am born, I shall die, I feel pain, I feel pleasure, I want to go to heaven, I do not want to go to hell.' These are the statements of the lower self. But the lower self disappears when the Higher Self is known, as the mirage disappears when the nature of the desert becomes known. When the lower self merges into the Higher Self grief and fear disappear. Any form of dependence brings sorrow and suffering. The lower self is dependent upon the outside world, it is dependent upon food and drink, on other beings ; or it is dependent upon God.

What is the cause of the appearance of the lower self? This question we cannot answer. The finite mind can never know the cause of the lower self. Therefore Vedanta philosophy describes it as māyā, or cosmic ignorance. What is cosmic ignorance, because of which the lower self appears, because of which the mirage appears in the desert? This māyā is the inscrutable power of the Absolute by which the One appears as the many or the Absolute appears as the multiplicity we see in the world. This māyā is the power of Brahman, but it does not have a separate existence as in Christian theology Satan has a separate existence. Māyā is inherent in Brahman. From this māyā is evolved the universe of living and non-living entities.

Why does the creation come into being? We do not know. The human mind cannot understand this because the mind itself is part of creation, but we know from the testimony of scriptures and the experience of the mystics that when one attains knowledge of the Higher Self the lower self or māyā disappears into the Higher Self. So it is said, when you know the Truth the Higher Self alone remains.

How does cosmic ignorance function? In two ways. It has the power of concealment and then the power of projection. Because of māyā the true nature of the Godhead is hidden, as when we fall asleep we are overcome by self-forgetfulness for the time being.

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And then comes the power of projection. Through this power all the names and forms in the universe are projected. As we forget ourselves in sleep we begin to have various dreams.

About the cause of the appearance of the lower self, three explanations are given. One is the doctrine of limitation; the second, that of dream; and the third, the doctrine of reflection.

The explanation of the doctrine of limitation is that the Higher Self is like the limitless space or sky and the lower self is like the same space inside a jar or vessel. The jar in this case is the body and mind. The Higher Self is Infinite Spirit or space, and when this Spirit is limited by the body and mind as space is limited by the jar, then the lower self appears. We know the space inside the jar is the same as the infinite space outside the jar. When the jar is broken the identity of the space inside the jar and the space outside is realized. Likewise it is the identification of the Spirit with the body and the mind that creates the lower self, and when one dissociates himself from the body and mind then he realizes the Higher Self. The characteristics of body and mind do not affect the Higher Self, as the dust or smell inside the jar cannot affect the infinite sky or space that is outside the jar. So birth, disease and death, pleasure and pain, grief and fear, cannot affect the Higher Self. Another illustration is the sky line. You are all familiar with the jagged line of buildings against the sky. There is the illusion that the sky has been cut by the tops of the buildings, but we know this is not so. In the same way the experiences of the body and mind cannot make an impression upon the Higher Self.

The second doctrine is that the lower self is a dream of the Higher Self. Why does it dream? We do not know because he who asks the question is also part of the dream. The dream presents multiplicity. We experience dream happiness or unhappiness and are in contact with dream objects. The experiences in dream are not outside the dreamer. They are within the dreamer himself, and when the dream vanishes the dream objects also disappear.

The third doctrine is the theory of reflection. We see the non-dual sun, one without a second, reflected in millions of waves, and thus we see millions of reflected suns. When the waves move the reflections also move. When the waves rise and fall, the reflections seem to rise and fall, too. But the real sun remains completely unchanged. So also the lower self, which is a reflection of the Higher Self in the mirror of the body and mind, experiences pleasure or pain, joy or suffering, and so forth, but the Real Self, like the sun, remains the detached witness. The real soul is not affected. This is illustrated in the Upanishads by the illustration of the two birds of self-same plumage seated on the same tree.

Two birds of beautiful plumage closely united in friendship reside on the same tree. The lower bird eats the sweet and bitter fruits, hopping from branch to branch, while the upper bird serenely looks on without eating. The lower bird, eating a particularly bitter fruit, grieves over his helplessness and looks up longingly. Then he forgets after he eats another sweet fruit. As he moves higher and higher in the tree, he beholds above him the majestic bird in all its glory and at last realizes that he himself is the upper bird, and he becomes free from all grief. He suddenly sees that all the while he was suffering he was identical with the upper bird.

To discover this Higher Self is the aim of Vedanta philosophy. The Higher Self exists in all of us, like the upper bird, and that Higher Self is the abode of peace or happiness or true freedom. The more fully we realize that area, that Higher Self, the less we are disturbed by the pairs of opposites, pain and pleasure, hunger and thirst, etc. The lower self cannot be denied so long as this cosmic ignorance exists; and so long as this māyā exists pain and pleasure cannot be denied. As long as the dream exists the dream experiences are real. The lower self is also real in that

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circumstance. But when the circumstance changes the lower self disappears.

Let us discuss the lower self. It is associated with a body, sense organs, mind, intellect and ego. The body, as you know, consists of material particles. It undergoes the changes of childhood, youth, maturity, old age, and death. It is sustained by food. It disintegrates for lack of food. This body is the abode of the lower self. It is the instrument for the practice of spiritual disciplines through which we attain to the experience of the Higher Self and liberation. Therefore the body is not to be despised or neglected.

Then the lower Self is associated with the sense organs, the five organs of perception and the five organs of action. The lower self is also endowed with a mind. The sensations gathered by the sense organs are presented to the mind. The function of the mind is to create doubt. This doubt in turn is resolved through the intellect, which makes the final decision by comparing present with past sensations. After that the ego experiences the result — either happiness or unhappiness.

So the lower self functions in three different states : the waking state, which experiences gross objects ; the dream state, which experiences subtle objects ; and the state of deep sleep, in which it experiences rest and relaxation. The lower self, associated with body, mind, sense organs, and ego, is always active.

Then there are three kinds of activities in which the lower self participates : the spiritual, the ethical or moral activities, and also the worldly activities that lead to the fulfilment of human desires. It can also be influenced by violence, cruelty, and jealousy. The lower self experiences the results of these actions. This is called the law of *karma*.

The fruit is reaped both in this life and after death. In this life we know we reap as we sow, and after death also the fruit is experienced in different planes, higher or lower. These different planes we cannot see with our eyes.

Where does the lower self go after death ? The scriptures are based on the mystical experiences of the seers. According to them there are three worlds where the lower self sojourns after death, depending upon the nature of its action on this earth. The highest world is called the solar world ; not the world that belongs to this sun, because this sun belongs to our galactic system. It is, instead, a sphere called Brahmaloka, which is the highest heaven, the abode of Brahma, the creator God. In that world one experiences condensed spirituality. No worldly thought is there. No hunger, thirst, old age, or death is there. Uninterrupted visions of God, uninterrupted bliss and joy are experienced by those who sojourn in Brahmaloka. Who goes there ? The extremely righteous person goes there after death. One strives here for self-realization but somehow it is not attained. One does not feel complete identity with the Higher Self. So, after death, he goes to the highest heaven and there he dwells in that condensed spiritual atmosphere enjoying peace and blessedness. He becomes almost as powerful as God Himself. From that plane one does not come back to the earth. At the end of the cycle those who dwell in Brahmaloka attain to liberation.

The second sphere is the lunar world. Neither does this refer to the moon we know. In this sphere there are different heavens. What does one experience in the lunar world ? Subtle and intense happiness is experienced there ; not spiritual happiness but physical happiness. What we experience here in a lesser degree is experienced there to the fullest possible intensity. Here our sensuous pleasure is cut short by disease and old age, but in the lunar sphere there is no disease or old age and so there are no obstacles to enjoyment. Who goes there ? He who practices rituals and performs devotions, he who gives in charity, the religious man who practises with motives. These people when they practise prayer and devotion are not without desire. They expect some return from God, and that which they expect from their worship or philanthropy, that fruit they enjoy in the lunar world. In that world they exist in fine subtle bodies and after their enjoyment is

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over, after the result of their action on earth is finished, they fall down from heaven again to earth. They fall first to the sphere of air and cloud and other regions and finally become raindrops which are absorbed by cereal and other plants and so ultimately are consumed by human bodies which again supply these souls with new birth. The lunar sphere is the heaven of the moral, pious man who is not altogether unselfish in his religious practice.

Then there is the intermediate region between heaven and earth. Cruel, sinful people go there after death. They become ghosts or demons or disembodied spirits. Spiritualists contact these spirits. They dwell for some time in that sphere and afterwards come back to the earth and become animals, and after they reap the fruit of past action in that animal body they are released and become human beings again. After that they get another chance to attain salvation.

The various spheres or heavens are places to experience the result of our past actions. It is also said in Hindu philosophy that the actions performed in animal bodies or god bodies do not cause rebirth. There are no effects in after life of such actions. So animals and gods do not produce fresh *karma* by their actions in such bodies. The human body is the only channel through which action is performed which produces results. Thus, if we seek salvation or liberation we must achieve it through a human body. Therefore man is the greatest being, the earth is the best place to attain salvation, and the human body is the best instrument to attain the highest knowledge of God. Even the gods must be reborn as human beings in order to attain salvation.

So, the near perfect go to Brahmaloka, the righteous go to the lunar world, and the wicked go to the intermediate world.

There is another class of people called *Jivanmukta,* who have attained to complete enlightenment in this body. What happens to them after death? Nothing. They go nowhere because there is no place for them to go. They have already attained to the knowledge of God and all illusion of other worlds is destroyed. Because of their realization the whole creation exists in themselves alone, their Real Self is the only Reality existent for them. Heaven and earth are created by ignorance. A *Jivanmukta* has attained the highest knowledge, so his ignorance has been destroyed and his dream creation has vanished; his individuality has vanished, and he becomes one with Brahman.

What are the different planes or spheres from the Vedantic standpoint? What are the experiences we undergo, in these different worlds? According to Vedanta these experiences are like reading a book or seeing a dream. I turn page after page, chapter after chapter, and I feel happy or unhappy depending upon the contents of the page. When I read a beautiful chapter I am happy and when the reading is cruel I am unhappy. So we are reading the pages of the book of life. These different planes and regions are different pages of the book of life. When the reading is finished I close the book and I am at peace. And when a man goes through all the experiences of all the planes he attains to Self-Knowledge and he is at peace.

The different spheres are like dreams. The soul is dreaming these planes. One dream yields to another dream and so, after going through all the different experiences, I awake again and then I am at peace for I have attained Self-Knowledge.

So you see all these different spheres from the standpoint of the Higher Self are only different states of mind. If I am an extremely wicked, violent, cruel person, shall I see the world as otherwise? No, I shall see the world as a place of suffering. For me then the world is hell. If I am an ethical and religious person, I shall see this world as heaven. And if I have realized my true nature, if I can commune with my Higher Self, I can see Brahman or the Pure Spirit everywhere.

There are several questions which can be asked. Is this knowledge of the Higher Self ever possible? If so, what are the means, how long does it take to attain this know-

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ledge? Then, what happens to the man after he has attained to the knowledge of the Self? And finally, what can this knowledge of the Higher Self do for us or for this world?

Is this knowledge possible? This knowledge is not a mere theoretical doctrine. It is an actual experience which can be had in this life. It is the birthright of every being. It is the meaning and fulfilment of evolution. In our own time we have seen people who have had this experience and who have shown us the way to attain this knowledge of the Higher Self. This knowledge is not the prerogative of a prophet or divine incarnation, it is the common property of all. Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, among others, have had this experience.

What are the means? Yoga is the way: the union of the lower self with the Higher Self. There are four Yogas that can be practised according to one's temperament or taste. These Yogas are unselfish action, motiveless love for God, discrimination between the Real and the unreal, and lastly, self-control and concentration. Through the practice of any one of these four Yogas one can obtain knowledge of the Higher Self.

How long does it take to attain this knowledge? The actual experience takes only a moment. It is described in the Upanishads as a flash of light or the wink of an eye. Darkness can be removed in the twinkling of an eye. The moment light is brought into a room the darkness disappears. No time factor at all is involved. It is only a question of attitude. If I put on dark glasses I see everything darkly. When I remove the glasses things appear in their true light. Something happens in your consciousness and you no longer see the mirage—you see the desert. In the same way, something happens in your consciousness and you no longer see the illusions, you see the Reality. But preparation is necessary for Self-Realization, and this preparation takes many, many lives. We try, we fail, again we try. One must be always prepared. Once you are prepared the experience comes through God's grace.

What happens to a man after this knowledge of the Higher Self? His body remains. As long as past *karma* operates he must live his allotted years. The lower self also remains. But the lower self can no longer misbehave. The lower self cannot hate, nor injure, nor commit any act of violence. The lower self remains as an appearance like the burnt-up rope. The ashes of a rope have the appearance of a rope, but if you blow on them they completely disappear. Such a man engages in prayer, meditation, doing good to others. He sees the world of diversity, he is conscious of his body, his mind, his sense organs, his ego. He will suffer from physical maladies, from grief and sorrow, he will also experience pleasure and pain, but all the while he knows the Higher Self and through this knowledge he knows that the experiences of the lower self, the pain, disease, hunger, and thirst, are not real, and so he is not deceived by these experiences any longer. As once you have seen the mirage disappear, the next time you see it you don't run after it, you know it for delusion and so enjoy it and wait for it to disappear.

Finally, what good will this knowledge do for us and for the world? People are often frightened at the thought of losing their individuality or even realizing the knowledge of the Higher Self. They think such knowledge will dry up their human emotions, their human feelings, affections and love. But this is not so. When you know your Higher Self you will love the world all the more. When your selfishness is gone, when your ego is destroyed, with hatred, jealousy, malice, competition no longer existing for you, you will see God in everything and in everyone. Then the husband will love the wife much more for seeing in her the Higher Self, and so the wife will love the husband, and the parents the children, when in them the Higher Self is seen. So it will be with all relationships. When in everything and in every being the Higher Self is seen we shall love equally all things and all beings.

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DNYANESHWAR

M. V. BHIDE

India has a rich cultural heritage in the shape of the teachings of her great Saints, who flourished in different parts of the country. The literature of the Vedic religion was embedded in Sanskrit, the ancient language of India, which had ceased to be spoken long ago. Sanskrit had given rise to a number of dialects and these, in their turn, had developed into a large number of languages, which are now current in different parts of the country. The old Vedic literature, being confined to Sanskrit, had become a sealed book to the masses. It was the privilege of the Brahmins, — the highest caste of India, — to study and expound the religious literature ; but with the lapse of time, it had become more and more difficult to understand and wrong interpretations were often placed by the Brahmins on the teachings of the Vedic religion with a view to increase their prestige and power. The Saints have done yeoman service to the masses by explaining the teachings of the Vedic religion in the languages which were spoken in India in their times, so as to make them easily intelligible. This was a movement similar to the Reformation led by Martin Luther, who flourished in Europe about the sixteenth century, and wrote a number of works including a translation of the Bible, with a view to reveal to the masses the true teachings of the Christian religion.

Amongst the earliest and greatest of these Saints, was Saint Dnyaneshwar (also called Gyaneshwar) who flourished in the latter part of the thirteenth century in Maharashtra, one of the provinces of South India. He wrote an elaborate commentary in Marathi,— the spoken language of Maharashtra, — on the Bhagavad-gita (shortly called Gita), which is deemed to contain the quintessence of the religion of what is known as *Vedanta.* The Vedic religion had passed through many phases. Starting with simple psalms addressed to various Deities, it developed into an elaborate system of sacrifices to those Deities. But that system brought its own reaction in course of time and eventually the Vedic religion culminated in the philosophical teachings of the Upanishads, which form the foundation of *Vedanta.* The word *Vedanta* has a two-fold meaning. *Vedanta* literally means the end of the Vedas, and the Upanishads were so called because they form the concluding portions of the different Vedas, to which they were attached. But the word also means ' the best and the highest teaching of the Vedas '.

A number of literary works are ascribed to Dnyaneshwar, but the most famous amongst them is a commentary in the Marathi language on the Gita, which is popularly called *Dnyaneshwari* after him. The *Dnyaneshwari* is not, however, merely an ordinary commentary, explaining word for word the text of the Gita. Although its theme is the text of the Gita and it interprets systematically the verses of the Gita, in their serial order, it takes the form of sermons addressed to a congregation, and is intended to impress the true import of the Gita on the audience by copious explanations and appropriate illustrations. The commentary is, therefore, also called *Bhavarthadipika* or the ' Light on the essential teaching of the Gita '. The next important work of Dnyaneshwar is called *Amritanubhava* which literally means ' Experience of the immortal '. Unlike *Dnyaneshwari,* it is not merely a commentary but an original work. It purports to explain the nature of Reality, and the way to realise it. In addition, a large number of devotional metrical compositions known as *Abhangas* are also attributed to him and are very popular. But it will be sufficient to deal with the *Dnyaneshwari* which is not only the greatest work of Dnyaneshwar but one of the greatest works in the Marathi language and

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throws a flood of light on the versatile genius of the author.

But before proceeding to a discussion of the *Dnyaneshwari* it will be appropriate to refer briefly to the life-story of the author. The life-story of Dnyaneshwar is remarkable. He was born in a Brahmin family, which was known for its religious devotion. His father Vithalpant belonged to the sect of the worshippers of the Deity Vithal of the well-known holy shrine at Pandharpur, in South India. He was of an ascetic turn of mind. Though he had been married, he suddenly left home and went to Varanasi (Benaras), which is looked upon as the holiest place of pilgrimage in India. There he became a disciple of a Guru or a learned teacher and was initiated by him into the ascetic order of Sanyasis. Strictly speaking, according to the tenets of the Hindu religion, Vithalpant being married, could not take to the ascetic life of a Sanyasi without the consent of his wife. But he had not disclosed to the Guru that he was married. It so happened that the Guru later on came to South India and visited the village where Rukmini, the wife of Vithalpant was residing. She had been in great distress since the departure of her husband and had been daily praying for his return. When the aforesaid Guru came to the village, Rukmini went to pay her respects to him and to seek his blessings. When she prostrated herself before him, he pronounced the customary blessing 'Be thou blessed with a son'. Rukmini then told him about her pathetic condition since the sudden departure of her husband Vithalpant. The Guru thus came to know that Vithalpant whom he had initiated into the Sanyasa order was married and was not entitled to become a Sanyasi, as he had not obtained the consent of his wife. On his return to Varanasi, the Guru, therefore, took Vithalpant to task for not disclosing to him that he was a married person and had not obtained his wife's consent and commanded him to renounce the ascetic order and go back to his village and live with his wife. Vithalpant had to obey and returning to his village began to live with his wife.

Four children were thereafter born to Vithalpant — three sons and one daughter. The exact dates of the births of these children are not known, but they are believed to have been born about the end of the twelfth century of the Christian Era. The three sons were named Nivritti, Dnyandeo, (later known as Dnyaneshwar), Sopandeo, and the daughter was named Mukti. The names of the children are, by the way, significant and show the yearning for 'Salvation', which was still uppermost in the mind of Vithalpant. The word *Nivritti* means renunciation. *Dnyan* means knowledge —particularly spiritual knowledge, — *Sopan* means a staircase, and *Mukti* means Salvation. The order in which the children were named indicates that Spiritual knowledge (*Dnyan*) follows renunciation (*Nivritti*) and it serves as a staircase (*Sopan*) to *Mukti* (Salvation) !

But although Vithalpant and his wife were devoted to religion and were leading a pious life, they had to face the persecution of the orthodox Brahmins, when they came to know that Vithalpant had become a 'Sanyasi' at Varanasi ; for they held that a man who had once become a Sanyasi could not return to family life and Vithalpant was, therefore, guilty of a grave sin and his progeny was illegitimate and the children were, therefore, not entitled to the various purificatory sacraments of the Hindu religion. Those sacraments were accordingly denied to the children. Vithalpant told the Brahmins that he had returned to family life under the command of his Guru, but in vain. The Brahmins excommunicated him and he had to live with his family in a small cottage outside the village and take to mendicancy to support the family.

It was during this period that the family visited Trimbakeshwar, one of the holy places of South India near the source of the river Godavari and Nivritti the eldest son, became initiated into *Nath-panth* — a religious order devoted to the study of Yoga. The story goes that when Nivritti had gone to a neighbouring hill, he suddenly happened to see a tiger and being frightened took shelter in a cave nearby,

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where Gahininath, a famous Yogi of the time, was sitting wrapt in deep meditation. Nivritti prostrated himself before him and prayed for his blessing. Gahininath is said to have been favourably impressed by the boy and initiated him into the yogic order known as *Nathpantha* to which he belonged. Yoga is, as is well known, a system of physical and mental culture peculiar to India, which has been traditionally handed down from Master to disciple, since ancient times. It is believed to bestow on the disciple wonderful powers (technically called Siddhis) such as clairvoyance, telepathy, cure of diseases, etc. culminating eventually in what is known as 'Samadhi', a state of ecstatic trance leading to communion with God. This system was epitomised into *Sutras* or short aphorisms by the sage Patanjali, about a century before the commencement of the Christian Era. These Sutras are still the principal authority on the subject. Yoga requires a long and rigorous course of training under the guidance of a well-qualified Guru and strict observance of the ethical rules of conduct. Consequently, genuine Yogis are rare. They are, moreover, averse to publicity and generally prefer to live in the solitude of the mountains. However, occasionally they are seen in India even in these days and their wonderful feats, such as burying themselves underneath the earth for days or even weeks, which are unintelligible to modern science, have been witnessed by critical educated observers and pronounced to be genuine.

Nivritti was only a young boy aged about sixteen when he was initiated into Yoga by Gahininath, but he soon became an adept and came to be known as Nivrittinath. He then initiated his younger brother Dnyaneshwar also into the mysteries of Yoga.

On return to their village, Vithalpant and his family had still to live as outcastes. They were getting tired of their miserable life and approached once more the Brahmin Pandits, who had excommunicated them and requested them to prescribe some expiatory atonement for their sin and take them back into their caste. But the hard-hearted bigoted Pandits could suggest nothing short of death to expiate their sin! Vithalpant and his wife were greatly disappointed. They were unable to stand any longer the hardships and indignities to which they were being subjected and in a desperate mood are said to have gone to the confluence of the holy rivers Ganga and Jamuna at Prayag (modern Allahabad) and put an end to their lives by throwing themselves into the holy waters — leaving their young children to the mercy of God!

Such was the sad fate to which the poor couple fell victims owing to the distorted and unjust interpretation which was being put upon the tenets of the old ritualistic religion, which had now become the monopoly of the Brahmins. Nivrittinath and Dnyaneshwar who had been initiated by their father into the Sacred lore, realised the mischief of this monopoly and the tyranny of the bigoted orthodox Pandits and they conceived the idea of bringing to the masses the true teaching of the Hindu religion as expounded in the Bhagawadgita by translating and commenting on it in Marathi, the spoken language of Maharashtra. As stated already, the Upanishads were a reaction and a protest against the old ritualistic phase of the Vedic religion and the Bhagawadgita contains the essential teaching of the 'Upanishads'. Bhagawadgita is described as 'Brahmavidya' i.e. the theoretical exposition of 'Brahma' or the Reality as well as 'Yogashastra' i.e. the practical method of attaining communion with Brahma. In the early portion of the Bhagawadgita, the old sacrificial religion which sought only material happiness is declared to be inferior. The Gita then proceeds to expound the higher religion i.e. the threefold path of *Dnyan* (spiritual knowledge), *Karma* (disinterested performance of duty) and *Bhakti* (intensely devotional life) leading to the attainment of *Moksha* or *release* from the cycle of births, and deaths and communion with *Brahma*. The religion of the Gita is of a universal character and not dependent on the performance of any particular rites or ceremonies or belief in or worship of any particular deity. In the ninth chapter of the Gita, it is specifical-

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ly declared that the devotional religion was open to all and not restricted to any class, and that it was the Royal road to Salvation (Raja-Vidya). In view of these characteristics the teaching of the Bhagawadgita was considered to be eminently suitable for the object which Nivrittinath and Dnyaneshwar had in view, and Dnyaneshwar was entrusted with the task of translating and commenting on the Gita by Nivrittinath, who was not only his elder brother but now also his Guru. Such was the great reverence which Dnyaneshwar had for his Guru that he has repeatedly declared in the course of his commentary that it was only the inspiration of his Guru Nivrittinath that had enabled him to perform the difficult task entrusted to him.

Many learned and elaborate commentaries had been written on the Gita in Sanskrit, by famous commentators like Sankara, Ramanuja etc., but none had yet been attempted in any vernacular. The proposed commentary on Gita in 'Marathi' was a bold enterprise; for it was considered sacrilege in those days to translate into vernacular, the sacred teachings of the ancient Vedic religion, as expressed by the inspired Rishis in Sanskrit — which was looked upon as a Divine language. But Dnyaneshwar decided to face the opposition and undertook the task. He was well-qualified for the task; for though young he was very intelligent and had studied the more important works on the Vedic religion under the guidance of his father, who was himself a learned Pandit. Dnyaneshwar loved the Marathi language and had a wonderful command over it. He had great faith in its power of expression and its suitability even for the treatment of philosophical subjects like those dealt with in the Gita. He declares with pride that with proper choice of words in the Marathi language he would make his commentary surpass even nectar in sweetness.

The Bhagawadgita is in the form of a dialogue between Lord Krishna and his friend and disciple Arjun. On the eve of the Great War between the two great ancient tribes of 'Kauravas' and 'Pandavas', which is the theme of the 'Mahabharat', the great epic of India, Arjun who was commander of the army of the Pandavas, was suddenly overcome by great grief when he went to inspect the armies arrayed on the battlefield and visualized the tremendous loss of life and ruin to both the parties, which was bound to result from the impending war! His mind revolted against the idea of killing the Kauravas, who were after all his kinsmen and amongst whom there were elders and preceptors like Bhisma and Drona, for whom he had the greatest respect. In this mood of dejection, he felt that it was preferable to forego the kingdom for which they had prepared to fight rather than incur the great sin of the slaughter of one's own kinsfolk. He was perplexed and did not know what to do. He, therefore, sought the advice of Lord Krishna, to whom he looked as his friend, philosopher and guide. Lord Krishna was surprised and took him to task for this exhibition of imbecility on the eve of the battle, so unworthy of a great Kshatriya hero like him. But finding that Arjun's despondency was not a mere passing mood as he thought at first, but was deep-seated and arose from a genuine aversion to the killing of those whom he loved and revered, Lord Krishna proceeded to teach Arjun his proper duty in the circumstances and he did so by expounding the whole philosophy of human life — man's duty, his goal and the way to attain it. Purporting as it does to be addressed to a layman, the Gita is couched in simple, lucid language and being in the form of a dialogue, various difficult points are elucidated in answer to questions put by Arjun from time to time. In short, it may well be described as 'Philosophy made easy for the layman'.

The Bhagawadgita consists of only about 700 verses, while the *Dnyaneshwari,* as the commentary written by Dnyaneshwar is called, contains about 9,000 'Ovis' or metrical verses. The length of the *Dnyaneshwari* is due to the fact that it contains a detailed exposition of the various topics in the Gita intended to make them easily intelligible to the layman. There are two prominent features which dis-

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tinguish the *Dnyaneshwari* from other commentaries. Dnyaneshwar was not merely a learned commentator but a gifted poet. In the 'Dnyaneshwari' we find a rare combination of poetry and philosophy. Dnyaneshwar's observation of nature as well as his knowledge of human life is remarkable. In dealing with his favourite topics, Dnyaneshwar's poetic fancy flowers into exuberance and the discussion is illuminated by a wealth of similes and metaphors of transcending beauty. While discussing such subjects, his words seem to flow spontaneously like a bubbling, sparkling stream. Dnyaneshwar, in fact, seems at times to forget himself and his treatment of a single topic spreads into inordinate length, — for which he apologises to the listeners when he comes to realise it! The second feature which distinguishes *Dnyaneshwari* is the fact that the author was not merely a scholar but a Yogi and a Mystic. Dnyaneshwar's commentary on the sixth chapter of the Gita contains a long discussion of the subject of Yoga and the way to attain Samadhi — or communion with Brahma, showing a remarkable knowledge of details which leaves no doubt that the author was not merely expounding a theory but speaking from personal experience.

In interpreting the Gita, Dnyaneshwar says that he was 'finding his way with the help of the great commentators'. He has not named any commentator in particular; but his interpretation seems to be mainly on the lines of that of Shankar — the great philosopher of Advaita Vedanta who lived about the eighth century of the Christian Era. But Dnyaneshwar is not a mere follower of tradition and has not hesitated to depart from it and place his original interpretation on the text, where necessary.

The *Dnyaneshwari* is remarkable for the dignity of its language, lucidity of exposition, poetic imagination and philosophical acumen. A combination of such versatile gifts in an author would be hard to find. Dnyaneshwar was indeed an intellectual prodigy. From the historical evidence available, it appears that he was only about 15 or 16, when he wrote the *Dnyaneshwari*. The production of such a monumental work at such a young age was a marvellous achievement for which it would be difficult to find a parallel.

Dnyaneshwari is not only one of the greatest works of Marathi literature, but deserves a high place in the religious and philosophical literature of the world. Unfortunately the language of the *Dnyaneshwari,* which was written about the end of the thirteenth century has now become antiquated and very difficult to understand even for Marathi readers. However, some good translations into modern Marathi have now been published and these have helped to increase the popularity of the work. Lately the work has also been translated into English.

The worship of the Deity Vithal in the sacred shrine at Pandharpur had been traditional in the family of Dnyaneshwar as already stated. After completing the *Dnyaneshwari,* Dnyaneshwar is said to have gone to Pandharpur to pay his homage to this Deity. There he made the acquaintance of other famous saints of the time like Namdeo and others. He then visited various other places of pilgrimage in different parts of India and returned to his native village about the year 1293 A.D. He was only about 21 years of age at that time. But for some reason or other, he seems to have decided to end his life in the state of *Samadhi.* Why he should have taken this decision is a mystery, which remains unsolved. His father and mother had been persecuted by the orthodox Brahmins for a long time, but after their death there had been a change. Dnyaneshwar's great learning and his mystic powers had gradually become known and had won for him fame and reverence of the people of the neighbourhood. Dnyaneshwar was then able to obtain from the Brahmin Pandits a *Shuddhipatra* — i.e. a declaration of his purification. So, there was no apparent reason for Dnyaneshwar to put an early end to his life. His friends and relations tried to dissuade him but failed and he adhered to his decision. Apparently he felt that his life work had been finished and preferred to live for ever in the

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ecstatic joy of communion with Brahma. In the sixth chapter of the Gita it is stated that the Yogi prizes nothing higher than the ecstatic union of the individual soul with the Reality. On the appointed day, Dnyaneshwar is said to have sat in a small cave in the state of *Samadhi*. The door of the cave was then closed as desired by him and his earthly life came to an end! Thus closed abruptly the short but brilliant career of this great Saint of versatile genius. His premature death cannot but be looked upon as a great loss to humanity.

At the place where Dnyaneshwar ended his life in *Samadhi*, a temple was built at Alandi and the place is visited by thousands of devotees of Dnyaneshwar. On the anniversary of the *Samadhi* day, there is a festival held which is attended by a large number of pilgrims from far and near. The *Dnyaneshwari* is the chief holy book of the worshippers of the shrine of Vithal at Pandharpur who are known as *Warkaris*. A big annual fair is held at Pandharpur in the month of *Ashadha* of the Indian Calendar, (corresponding to July-August), which is attended by thousands of *Warkaris*. As Dnyaneshwar was a devotee of Vithal, his *Padukas* (models of foot marks) are placed in a palanquin along with a copy of the holy book — *the Dnyaneshwari* — and the palanquin is taken from Alandi to Pandharpur in a procession every year. Large numbers of *Warkaris* accompany the palanquin on foot chanting devotional songs of Dnyaneshwar and other saints. They have to make several halts on the way and take about a fortnight to reach Pandharpur. At each halt the people of the neighbouring villages flock to pay their respect to the *Padukas* of the Saint placed in the Palanquin and some of them join the procession. On the 11th day of *Ashadha* these *Warkaris*, whose numbers swell upto a hundred thousand or more, pay their annual worshipful homage to Vithal amidst a round of religious festivities and then return to their homes.

Dnyaneshwar is one of the most popular saints of Maharashtra and is called *Mauli* or the 'Mother', in reverential affection by his followers. More than six centuries have elapsed since the death of this great Saint, but the *Dnyaneshwari*, which is his richest legacy to posterity, is recited and preached by spiritual teachers in temples all over Maharashtra and attracts large audiences to this day.

THE GURU AND HIS COMPASSION

BANGOVINDA PARAMPANTHI

Many times we have read the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna in original and translation and also heard discourses on it but it never grows old or savourless. It is as fresh as ever. Everytime one opens its pages one finds something new; finds a solution for some problems he presently faces. Here is a passage,

> 'Physicians can be divided into three classes. First those who called in look at the patient, feel the pulse, prescribe the necessary medicine and then ask the patient to take them. If the patient declines to do so, they do not care. This is the lowest class of physicians. Similarly there are spiritual teachers who do not care to know whether their instructions have been practised or whether they have produced good results in their disciples. There are other physicians who not only ask the patient to take the prescribed drug but who reason with him if he refuses to take it. These belong to the second class. Similarly those spiritual teachers who not only instruct their pupils but reason with them and gently persuade them to follow their teachings are better than those mentioned before. But the best physicians who belong to the highest class use force on the patient, if he does not listen to their gentle persuasions. They may go so far as to make him swallow the medicines by force if necessary. Similarly the best spiritual masters use force on their disciples to bring them into the path of the Lord. These teachers belong to the highest class.'[1]

[1] Swami Abhedananda: *Memoirs of Ramakrishna*, (1939), pp. 286-7. *Kathamrita*-1 (4 ed.), p. 54.

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What struck me most about this passage is the classification of teachers. Sri Ramakrishna pointed out the classes of teachers, perhaps, as a warning to our follies. The conception of Guruvad is one of the cardinal principles on which the edifice of Hinduism stands, it stresses that without Guru one cannot reach the highest state of bliss, call it Moksha or Salvation. This lofty ideal of Guruvad seems to have fallen on evil days as every one wants to be a Guru; time has now come to examine this doctrine critically and understand its true meaning. Against this background we have to understand Sri Ramakrishna's illustration of the physicians. And if we reflect on it we will understand who is a Guru in the true sense of the word and what should be the true ideal of a Guru.

The importance of a Guru in spiritual life has been repeatedly stressed in all our holy books. Sri Sankara says :

> 'What avails a man if he is proficient in all the Vedas and learns all the scriptures or if he can wield a facile pen in prose or poetry and get encomium from far and near if his mind does not cling to the feet of Guru?'

In the Hindu scheme of spiritual sadhana the Guru takes the highest place hence we come across so many definitions of Guru in our scriptures. The Upanishads unequivocally declare :

> 'In order to know that Brahma he should go with sacrificial fuel in hand to a preceptor who is well-versed in Vedas and established in the knowledge of Brahman. The learned preceptor should teach such a pupil as approaches him in proper form and with peaceful mind and controlled senses, the knowledge of Brahman.'[2]

Guru the enlightener thus enlightens the disciple about the nature of Brahman and casts away the darkness of ignorance.

The main thing that leads one to spiritual life is the inner urge, the urge to know 'Who am I.' We cannot solve this problem by ourselves, a helping hand is required to lead us on that path of inquiry and a person who has already solved this problem for himself can fulfil the purpose. Arjuna's approach to Sri Krishna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra will illustrate this point. We know how Arjuna came to the battlefield driven by the divine charioteer full of fire to fight the battle, but was thrown into the abysmal depths of delusion when he was faced with his kith and kin in the enemy camp. Bewildered he started philosophising on the evil effects of fratricide. Krishna chastised Arjuna for his attitude as unbecoming of an Aryan. He did not discuss the merits or demerits of war then, he knew that Arjuna was still thinking himself to be learned and knower of dharma. But when Arjuna realised his own limitations and weakness and appealed for help saying :

> 'My very being is stricken with the weakness of pity. With my mind bewildered about my duty, I ask Thee. Tell me for certain what is good. I am Thy pupil; teach me who am seeking refuge in Thee.'[3]

Krishna taught him then. Arjuna expresses the same sentiment again in the VI chapter.

> 'Thou should dispel completely this my doubt, O Krishna, for there is none else than Thyself who can destroy this doubt.'[4]

Humility is a necessary virtue in the aspirant is evident from this.

Primarily the meaning of the word Guru, as given in our ancient books is the dispeller of darkness or *ajnana* : *ajnana* or the ignorance which envelops man blurs his vision as to the true state of the world, hence all sorts of troubles arise. The Guru's work is to dispel the ignorance. When Swami Vivekananda first met Sri Ramakrishna he put the question : 'Would you Sir, be able to show me God?' 'Yes', answered Sri Ramakrishna forthwith. The Guru in this way first instils hope in the devotee and then leads him through several processes of sadhana. But this assurance of deliverance and dispelling of ignorance cannot be given by all. God Himself comes on this earth in the form of Guru for that purpose. Brahman can only teach about Brahman. Sri

[2] *Mundaka-I*, 2, 12-13.

[3] Gita, II. 7.

[4] Gita, VI. 39.

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Ramakrishna's dictum is : 'Satchidananda is the only Guru'. All our salutory hymns describe Guru as Brahman, the manifestation of the Supreme Godhead. A devotee is to look upon the Guru with such faith, for does he not accept him as the dispeller of ignorance and disseminator of knowledge (*jnānadā*). If we do not have love and reverence for the teacher how can we expect to derive any benefit from his teaching? Even in our ordinary life we experience that if we do not have faith and reverence towards our teacher in the classrooms we fail to achieve success in our educational career. Guru leads us on the path of spiritual life. That is why devotees like Kabir, Nanak, Mira and others sang the glory of Guru (*Gurumahima*) in such glowing terms. Mira sings :

> 'It is more difficult to get a Guru than God. He only perceives a true Guru whose eyes have opened through the Grace of God. O Lord, give me refuge at your feet by becoming my Guru. Hari brought me to the feet of Guru, Guru showed me the way to Hari.'

The Bhagavata says :

> 'One should know the teacher to be "My own self" and never disregard or look down upon him as a man, for the teacher represents all the gods.'

What a lofty ideal of Guru they have placed before us through their mystic realisation! They did not distinguish between Guru and *Ishta* (Chosen Ideal) ; both were one and the same to them. We must have this fuller idea of supreme uniqueness of Guru. When Christ asked Peter : *'Whom say ye that I am'*, he readily replied that he was the son of living God. Peter had that realisation, and Christ's reply to him is very significant,

> 'Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona : For flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee but my Father which is in heaven.' [5]

It is said final liberation can be had through Guru Kripa (*mokshamulam Gurukripa*). Therefore, to get a true Guru is the highest consummation of all our spiritual aspiration for he it is that shows us the Reality that is hidden in our inner being.

The basic conception of Guruvad is that one has to accept a Guru and look upon him as the very embodiment of God. But it never wants anybody to be subservient to him even at the cost of all his reason. There are some who feel and think that Guruvada requires sacrifice of one's reason to a personality on faith. On the contrary it asks us to reason with the Guru, to clear away whatever doubts we may have, through searching questions. By cogent and well-thought-out arguments one can find the solution of one's doubts and problems. Gita says :

> 'Learn that by humble reverence, by enquiry and by service. The man of wisdom who has seen the Truth will instruct thee in knowledge.' [6]

or as Buddha says :

> 'Do not accept my teaching as true because it has been handed down from generation to generation or because it is in accordance with your past tradition or because it seems very good or because it strengthens your faith or because I am a celebrated and respected sage. But accept it only if it appears right to your discriminating intelligence.'

Unless this spirit of enquiry or *jijnasa* coupled with reverence brings us to a Guru we cannot be said to be true disciples. We have an illustration of this kind of relation between the preceptor and the disciple in Vasistha and Rama, in the Yogavasistha Ramayana. Rama as disciple asks questions to resolve his doubts and Vasistha as Guru answers them with care and repose. A disciple is free to discuss and argue all his questions until he has satisfied himself. Dr Radhakrishnan has made this point clear. He says :

> 'We must combine devotion to the teacher with the most unrestricted right of free examination and enquiry. Blind obedience to external authority is repudiated. To-day there are several teachers who require of their followers unthinking obedience to their dictates. They seem to believe that the death of intellect is the condition of the life of spirit. Many credulous and simple minded

[5] St. Mathew, 16/14-17.

[6] Gita, VI. 34.

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people are drawn to them not so much by their spiritual powers as by the publicity of their agents and the human weakness for novelty, curiosity and excitement. This is against the Hindu tradition which insists on *Jijnasa* or enquiry, manana, reflection or "pariprasna", repeated interrogations in the word of the Gita.'[7]

One of the distinguishing features of Hinduism down the ages is that it never thrusts anything upon any body. It keeps the door of man's mental vision open so that one may accept anything according to his capacity and temperament. The Gita says :

'The faith of every individual O Bharata is in accordance with his nature. Man is of the nature of his faith. What his faith is that verily he is.'[8]

Although we have the Kulaguru system it could not wield much influence over the society as a whole but remained confined only to individual sphere or to a family group.

The highest class of Guru like his physician counterpart, in the sayings of Sri Ramakrishna, on the other hand sees that his teaching and training strike deeper root in his disciple. He never leaves his disciple to his fate nor exacts respect and reverence. He takes up every responsibility of the disciple's spiritual life. Sri Ramakrishna was the ideal teacher. He used to keep a keen watch over all his disciples and if any of them failed to turn up at Dakshineswar for a long period he felt greatly concerned. At the same time we know how he allowed his disciples to argue with him day after day. Even when he was suffering from cancer in the throat he never stopped his spiritual ministry.

Of course there are certain qualifications that a Guru or teacher should possess. He can only guide and teach who has himself received illumination. When it is said that Guru is sitting yonder stockstill, yet doubts of the disciples fade away one by one, it is meant that his spiritual power is such that it does not require him to utter words or argue. His ever compassionate feeling extends in such a manner that the disciple before him feels that spiritual current which satisfies all his doubts and enquiries. Sri Ramakrishna once touched Vivekananda when he was wafted into a state which baffles our mind and beggars description. This is the spiritual force of the Guru that works in the disciple, transforming him completely, thus establishing a kinship true and abiding. Paul Brunton writing about Sri Ramana Maharshi tells us of one such experience. He writes :

'There is something in this man which holds my attention as steel filings are held by magnet. I cannot turn my gaze away from him. My initial bewilderment, my perplexity at being totally ignored, slowly fade away as this strange fascination begins to gripe me more firmly. But it is not till the second hour of the uncommon scene that I became aware of a silent resistless change which is taking place within my mind. One by one the questions which I have prepared on the train with such meticulous accuracy drop away. For it does not now seem to matter whether they are asked or not and it does not seem to matter whether I solve the problems which have hitherto troubled me. I know only that a steady river of quietness to be flowing near me, that a great peace is penetrating the inner reaches of my being and that my thought-tortured brain is beginning to arrive at some rest.' . . . 'When I propounded some fresh problem he makes no answer. Instead he gazes out towards the jungle covered hills which stretch to the horizon and remains motionless. Many minutes pass but still his eyes are fixed, his presence remote. I am quite unable to discern whether his attention is being given to some invisible psychic being in the distance or whether it is being turned on some inward preoccupation. At first I wonder whether he has heard me but in the tense silence which ensues and which I, unable or unwilling to break a force greater than my rationalistic mind commences to awe me until it ends by overwhelming me.'[9]

It is but one of the few instances how spiritual teachers inspire, guide and enlighten the disciples. *Diksha* or initiation is the process to give him new birth in the world of spirituality. And through it he unburdens him from all worldly follies, failures and frightening sense of sin. This makes the disciple more

[7] Bhagavadgita (Tr. by Dr Radhakrishnan), 1948, p. 169.
[8] Gita, XVII. 3.
[9] A Search In Secret India — 14th impression, pp. 102, 201.

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cautious, as it devolves upon him a great responsibility. We owe a responsibility and duty not only to the spiritual preceptor but to the ideal which we swear by. Complete transformation is not a mere word but something evolutionary whose process is itself felt. The outward rituals of *diksha* performed by the Guru, such as giving of Mantra, are but reminders of the great ideal of life which one is to accept, in fact it is, in the words of St. John, the baptism with holy ghost and with fire. *Diksha* in other words is the remission of sin and kindling the light of knowledge. It should not be construed here that by remission of sin means one is absolved of all its effects. He will have to pass through certain processes as shown by the Guru to get rid of its effects. When Sri Ramakrishna asked Girishchandra to give him the power of Attorney the latter without hesitation agreed, thinking that all the responsibility of saving him will be Sri Ramakrishna's. But it meant a great deal, Girish Ghosh had thereafter to completely efface his ego and constantly think of Sri Ramakrishna before doing any work, before promising to do anything. It was said of St. Benedict, who flourished in the 3rd century, that though he lived a fast life in early youth yet a sudden conversion came upon him when he realised his lapses and follies, and surrendered himself to God, but what mortifications did he not undergo! Pope Gregory I records of him as under :

> 'But suddenly assisted by God's grace he came to himself and seeing many thick briers and nettle bushes growing hard by, off he cast his apparel and threw himself into the midst of them and there wallowed so long that when he rose up all his flesh was pitifully torn and so by the wounds of his body he cured the wounds of his soul.' [10]

By initiation the Guru keeps us in constant remembrance of what responsibility and duty we owe him and to our own spiritual life. A popular adage runs that Gurus can be had by thousands but rarely one can find a true disciple, quite so. How many disciples follow the instruction of the Guru? That is why world teachers did not have many disciples. A selected few received their grace. But these few were trained in such a way that their very presence inspired thousands. Jesus said, '*Many are called but few are chosen. Strait is the gate narrow is the way.*' It is said of Swami Brahmananda and other direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna that they used to go deep into meditation before initiating anybody and extended their favour only to those who appeared to them to be fully competent. It is not for nothing that our scriptures emphasise so much on the competency (*adhikara*) of an aspirant.

Two factors therefore are essential for true discipleship *Gurukripa* (grace of Guru) and the earnestness and readiness on the part of the aspirant or disciple to follow the master. The grace of Guru is dependent upon the second factor. Spiritual earnestness or thirst comes when we realise its necessity—necessity for a higher living. Otherwise mere reading of scriptures, regular visit to temples or rigid observances of rituals would hardly be of any avail.

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[10] Will Durant : The Story of Civilisation, Vol. IV, p. 517.

THE BOW AND THE ARROW

When can I SEE my shape
As Thy Shape
As all-pervading
Transcendent Form
Without the difference
Of Night and Day?

When can I make
My Mind into a bow;
My Senses, a string;
My Reason, an arrow;
And release it
To reach
The Target?

—ANONYMOUS (Translated from Tamil by R. S. MURTI.)

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ALAMBAZAR MATH

And the Inception of the Vow of Service

(Continued from the previous issue)

SWAMI AKHANDANANDA

Dr Nitaicharan Haldar

Some months before Swamiji's return from America Nitai Babu would come every afternoon in his carriage and pair to the Math with a basket of the best sweets of Barabazar. Nitai Babu was a noted Homoeopathic physician of the Barabazar locality. He was the father-in-law of Babu Purna Chandra Seth of Banstala Lane, Barabazar. When Swami Brahmananda paid his visits to the Master he saw Nitai Babu with the latter and became intimate with him.

When Nitai Babu was coming to the Math regularly we received in every mail Swamiji's lectures printed in America in booklet form. We read those with great avidity and Nitai Babu would listen attentively. He usually came to the Math after three or four in the afternoon and left after the evening Arati. The first harmonium of the Math was a gift of Nitai Babu. I read almost all the books and booklets of Swamiji, published in those days.

Formerly while arguing, Swamiji sometimes advanced views that made him rather mysterious. By turns he would be an atheist, an agnostic, a pyrrhonist, again a theist, a monist, a dualist, or a nihilist Buddhist. At one time he would be an upholder of the Vedantic doctrine '*Nāham nedam* (Not I, nor this)' and again he would be inebriated with the lover's attitude, as in the case of the Gopis in the sports of Krishna. While discussing Buddha we would be filled with a calm both internally and externally and the sound of Sankirtan (song in the praise of God) to the accompaniment of Khol and Karatal (musical instruments) which we had indulged in a short while before, died away in a moment. Swamiji himself would, along with us, repeat '*Nāham nedam, nāham nedam*'.

When Swamiji took a particular stand nobody could move him from it. But the marvel is that his lectures contained doctrines supported by the three Prasthānas (Upanisads, Brahmasutra and Gita), as in the case of the great Acharyas of different schools of philosophy. It is known to all how Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhvacharya, Nimbarka and even Mahaprabhu Chaitanyadeva had to take their stand on the three Prasthānas to establish their schools of Advaita, Visishtadvaita, Dvaita, Dvaitadvaita, Achintyabhedabheda etc.

The views of Western scholars about the time of the Vedas and other scriptures were ignored by Swamiji in his lectures as 'many men, many minds'.

One day in a speech in America he said, 'Man progresses birth after birth, he has no retrogression, such as being re-born as beasts and other creatures.' Seeing this I was in a fix. 'How is it that after all from Swamiji's lips would come out views not supported by scriptural texts,' thought I. As this view was contrary to the doctrines of the Sruti (Vedas) I showed to Ramakrishnananda a Mantra (verse) in the Chhandogya Upanishad where it is said : of the *Jivas* (souls) that come back from the lunar sphere those who have done good deeds in their life here will surely have blessed births in the families of Brahmins, Kshatriyas or Vaisyas. But those with evil deeds will have baser births as dogs, swines etc. He snatched it away from my hands and asked me not to talk about it anywhere.

A few days after this I read in another writing of Swamiji, that the soul has both pro-

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gress and retrogression. I was mystified. I thought that Swamiji would be soon coming. On his arrival my difficulty would be solved. Thinking thus I did not discuss much about it. At this time news came that Swamiji had reached Ceylon. Swamis Sivananda and Niranjanananda started for Ceylon to bring him.

Before Swamiji came back from America most of us in the Math would be '*Koupinavantah Khalu bhāgyavantah*—fortunate indeed is the Sanyasi that has but the loin-cloth to wear.' If an unknown outsider came they would wear a piece of *Bahirvāsa* (outer covering). Of women the only visitor was the very old Gopala's Mother.

At Tarakeswar

My idea was that it would be in the fitness of things if the Mahānta (chief monk) of Tarakeswar, with his paraphernalia, came to receive Swamiji. For none near about Calcutta, belonging to the Sankarite group was wealthy like this Mahanta, with the charge of worship of Bābā Tarakeswar. Of Mahanta Madhava Giri, a little ill-famed for some affairs, the Master would say, 'There is a little portion of Siva in him. But who can avoid what is fated to be?' We had seen him. He left two disciples, Satish Giri and Hem Giri. The two brother-disciples had gone to court for the ownership of the estate. Hem Giri was then at Calcutta and Satish Giri at Tarakeswar.

I took the train to Tarakeswar and on reaching there went direct to Mahanta Satish Giri. Then 'the Statutory Civilian' Sri Umesh Chandra Batabyal, writer of Vedic articles and books, was there.

I requested Mahanta Satish Giri to lead in the reception of Swamiji but he refused, because Swamiji was a Kayastha Sanyasi. As he showed disrespect to Swamiji for his caste, I told Satish Giri many things by way of a rebuke, stating how Swamiji had received an unimaginably enthusiastic reception from the whole of Madras even from Rameswaram in the extreme south, at the hands of the Vaisnava chiefs belonging to the Sri Sampradaya of Ramanuja, the Saivites and many other great personages. I told him how the Raja of Ramnad, the representative and votary of Rameswara had shown Swamiji unprecedented honour by pulling his carriage himself. In clear words I said, 'You are really unfortunate to miss this chance of joining in this reception of a personality rarely to be found in the world.' I was then speaking chaste Hindi and Mr Batabyal was all attention to what we were saying.

I lost no more time there but at once came to the temple of Siva. After visiting the Lord I was standing in the temple when a bearer of the Mahanta came and told me that the latter had summoned me. I feared that the Mahanta might insult me. If I refused to go the degree of insult might increase, thinking thus, I accompanied the bearer to the Mahanta.

As I went to him the Mahanta very humbly begged to be excused as he was worried by a law-suit and had no time to come to Calcutta. He persuaded me to have my meal there.

In my boyhood I had heard of the Kāli of the dacoits of Singur on the way to Tarakeswar. To see with my own eyes the havoc caused by malaria to the villages of Hooghly district I wished to return on foot. On the way I did not spend more than one night at any village. In every village, in which I saw deserted homesteads, lands overgrown with weeds, it was apparent what a toll malaria had taken in the locality. Every village had some tanks or cesspools choked with moss. Even though suffering from fever, the men, with chaddars tied round their waists, were going to other villages to partake of a dinner of curd and chira (a preparation of rice). There were on everyone's belly three or four round scars left by blisters made for curing an enlarged spleen. Their bellies were so unusually fat that from a distance they looked like so many bellies walking on the road. The size of the spleen was evident from the fatness of the belly. But they said, 'Our spleen will never diminish, nor can we shake off our fever; how long then can we go on without such a dinner?'

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At this miserable plight of the villages of the Hooghly District, so near Calcutta, I felt mortally wounded at the callousness of the so-called patriots. Such a miserable condition of the country will not be tolerated among awakened nations in their days of regeneration. If such calamities befell them owing to some unavoidable reason, they will have a speedy redress.

All the villages that I saw on the way were almost depopulated by the ravages of malaria. It was winter. On my way I found cultivators boiling date juice to make it into molasses. Some of them called me and gave me hot juice (Tatrasi) to drink. That was the first and last time in my life I took hot date juice.

As I went my way one evening I came to the temple of the 'Robbers' Kali' of Singur, which was just by the side of the road. As it was the 'Robbers' Kali', I had imagined that the Mother's appearance must be horrifying, but I saw nothing of the kind. The only peculiar features were that the image of the Mother was rather of a big size and She stood facing the West. There was no habitation near by except an old temple. Sitting on the verandah outside the temple the tales about the past of the temple crowded into my mind. From the situation of the temple it was apparent that the dacoits assembled there. The dacoits worshipped the deity by sacrificing a human being and therefore there was no necessity for a kitchen and other accessories.

Hundreds of pilgrims to Tarakaswar were brutally murdered on this road by the robbers. The famous 'One-eyed sergeant' of Calcutta skilfully arrested gangs of them and sent them up for trial and removed the dread of robbers for the travellers. All these things came back to my mind. As it grew dark I became a guest at the house of a gentleman of Singur and spent the night there.

At Triveni I had a mind to visit the home of Pandit Jagannath Tarkapanchanan of sacred memory. As I got into the house I saw a dilapidated chapel and on the west a two-storied building. On the verandah of the building his great-grandson was rubbing oil on his body. At my request he showed the spot on the verandah where Sir William Jones sat taking lessons on Sanskrit from the venerable Pandit.

The sight of the old house convinced me that at one time the Pandit was in prosperity. The home of the famous Pandit appeared to me to be a holy place of pilgrimage and with great respect I took the dust of the place on my head and departed.

A Brahmin scholar of the Vedas

I learnt from a letter of Pramadadas Babu of Banaras that there was in a village of the district of Ayodhya a Brahmin Vedic scholar after my heart. He was a man of an unassuming nature and did not like to make a parade of his learning. He was informed that if he came to Bengal and introduced Vedic learning his name would endure for ever. He now agreed to come if he was paid Rupees Forty a month and was given his daily provisions. On learning this, Ramakrishnananda agreed to make provision any how for paying the Pandit Rupees Forty a month, although he found it hard to procure four pice worth of sugar-candy for the Master.

Just at that time as Swamiji reached Colombo this good plan of ours could not be executed. But now I think, if Swamiji had seen that we had brought a Vedic scholar at the Math and had arranged for Vedic teaching his joy would have known no bounds. However, the news of his first return from America had made us so joyous that we scarcely had any time to think of other things, except about him.

(To be continued)

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CAN REVELATION AND INTUITION BE REGARDED AS INDEPENDENT AND RELIABLE SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE?

K. R. VENKATASUBRAMANIAN

Before we proceed to evaluate the nature and content of revealed and intuitive knowledge it is necessary to analyse the broad divisions of knowledge and to consider its scope and probable sources.

The Broad Divisions of Knowledge : In the widest sense, knowledge can be divided into : (1) Material knowledge, and (2) Spiritual knowledge or wisdom.

It is an admitted fact that every body has knowledge of the external universe, but it is extremely doubtful how many possess a spiritual insight. Obviously, therefore, there is a tendency among many to decry spiritual knowledge or to deny it altogether on the grounds that it is extremely mystical, that only persons disinterested in the world seek for it, and that, even if it is regarded by some as real, ordinary men cannot comprehend such wisdom. How far this opinion is justified depends upon how much importance we give to revelation and intuition. I shall discuss about it subsequently, but now let me examine what is it that a knowledge of the external world can impart to us and how far it is reliable.

Knowledge of the External Universe : A knowledge of the external world implies a subject-object relationship. Such knowledge is knowledge about something of somebody. We are the persons who experience something. About this there is not much of controversy. But, as to the object of experience, there are wide differences of opinion. What is the object about which we claim knowledge?

In answer to this, many philosophers say that we perceive only the sense-data, while some other idealist philosophers like Locke, Berkeley, and Hume maintain that we have knowledge only of ideas. Learning all these views, I am here specially interested in W. T. Stace's view which is expressed in his interesting book, *The Theory of Knowledge and Existence.*

Pragmatist's Justification of Knowledge — Success in Action : In the first chapter, Knowledge as a Value, Stace remarks :

> 'Knowledge, like all other human things, has grown up in the struggle for existence. . . . The pragmatists tell us that the justification of knowledge is success in action, and its value is a survival value.'

In support of this view we may maintain that knowledge, of course, has given man a superiority over other creatures. This fact is quite clear if we go back to the history of 'natural man'. But it is a grave error to give it a survival value. This view saps the wisdom altogether. Stace is therefore, entirely correct when he comments that,

> 'theories of knowledge and ethics which reduce both truth and morality to a striving after the satisfaction of the non-spiritual desires destroy completely the conception of value.'

He, however, entirely misinterprets Indian philosophy in saying that

> 'the Indian only values philosophical knowledge if it can be put to practical use in freeing the soul from "the wheel of things", in attaining Nirvana, union with Brahman, or some other such self-regarding end.'

The philosophers of the East recognize Wisdom or Nirvana, as the ultimate aim of human existence, but they do not attach any utilitarian standard to such conception. The Union with Brahman, the Vedantists say, is the ultimate goal which every body without exception is bound to reach and without fail. It is not a 'self-regarding' virtue or 'end' in the utilitarian sense but a necessity which nobody can escape.

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Now, let us go further and see what Stace says about 'The Given' and 'The Concepts of the Given'.

The Given: While accepting the correctness of the method of Descartes's philosophy, Stace doubts the *application* of Descartes's method. Descartes starts with the ego, whereas Stace says that our beginning should be the given. For, according to him, 'the given is what is certain in knowledge'. For him, the foundation of knowledge is the experience itself as distinguished from the ego which is the experiencer.

According to Stace, our belief about the external world is reduced to: (1) the mental report of what is directly given, or (2) an abstraction from what is given, or (3) an inference from what is given, or (4) a mental construction.

Stace distinguishes *the* given from *my* given. *The* given is itself an abstraction, an end-result of thought which cannot, therefore, be a beginning. For it is a concept generalized from the various givens of different individuals, whereas *my* given is the self-enclosed experience of the individual, which is the true starting point of philosophical journey.

He further distinguishes between the metaphysical given and the logical given. The metaphysical given is conceived by Kant in his thing-in-itself which, according to Stace, implies a dualism of mind and object. Epistemology is concerned only with the logical given by which is meant anything that is necessarily taken as given or granted, as logically ultimate and indisputable in an argument. The difference between the metaphysical and logical givens consists, according to him, in that the former is given in the sense of 'presented' or 'gifted'; while the latter is given in the sense of 'granted in argument'. In this connection Stace introduces another distinction, viz. the world of the I and the world of the not-I. The world of the I is the internal world or mind, and of not-I is the external world or matter. The world of the not-I, being the given, is independent of the mind. In conclusion, Stace says that thinking, feeling, and attending are the activities of the internal world whereas presentations (i.e. images of sense, of dream, hallucination, or delusion), duration-spread, and extension-spread, and certain relations such as resemblance form part of the external world.

Stace does not deny the importance of pure awareness in knowledge, and hence, I presume, he accepts the validity of intuitive knowledge. He considers it as a distinguishable element in knowledge and the logically prior element.

The Concept of the Given: So far we have been giving an account of the given as viewed by Stace. Now it is natural to ask what he means by the concept of the given. His answer is,

> 'conceptual thought is the instrument with which the mind works upon the given. The given in itself is a chaos of presentations and presented relations. This chaos the mind reduces to order by means of its concepts. The mind is the builder of the cosmos, and its bricks are the varied elements of the given.'

He distinguishes two aspects in the concept itself: (1) the mind's instrument for dealing with the given, and (2) that aspect which itself is part of the given. The second aspect is the objective aspect of the concept because in this aspect the concept forms an indistinguishable part of the given; and the first aspect is the subjective aspect because in it the concept is an instrument which the mind uses on the given. By concepts of the given, Stace means in general the logically first kinds of concepts.

It is not possible for us to give a full account of Stace on the subject, nor it is within my intellectual competence to criticise him because my criticism is likely to end in misinterpretation of his true position. However, with due apology to Stace, I may enter into a brief criticism before I proceed to analyse the probable sources of knowledge.

1. *Criticism of Stace's View about The Given*:

(a) Religious beliefs of saints and mystics do not depend upon the given: First, it appears to me that Stace, in reducing our

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belief in the external world to (i) the mental report of the given, (ii) an abstraction, (iii) an inference, or (iv) a mental construction, is theorizing our beliefs too much instead of giving us a practical account. The origin of belief is very difficult to trace out and, if Stace's account is correct, how are we to explain the beliefs of the saints and mystics who identify the world with Brahman and not as a separate objective entity apart from us. I believe that he cannot entirely ignore such beliefs because there are several examples to it given by the hagiologists.

(b) Epistemology is not confined to the Logically Given alone : Secondly, when he confines epistemology to the Logically Given which he defines as anything that is necessarily taken as given in argument, he restricts the scope of epistemology which, in fact, ought to deal with every type of theories of knowledge. Accordingly, therefore, the metaphysically given, which we may define as the Ultimate Reality, must also form part of epistemology.

(c) Pure experience cannot be had from empirical knowledge : Thirdly, when Stace emphasizes pure experience itself as the foundation of knowledge and not the ego which is the experiencer he contradicts himself. By knowledge, he does not mean here pure knowledge as such, which according to Vedantic conception, tantamounts to wisdom or Realization (Atmabodha). Hence the restriction of knowledge to pure experience is fallacious because ordinary knowledge involves a subject-object relationship. We cannot isolate experience from the ego so long as we deal with empirical knowledge.

2. *Criticism of Stace's View about the Conception of The Given* :

(a) Mind is not the builder of the cosmos : When we critically examine Stace's view regarding the concept of the given, we find that his explanation is not entirely satisfactory. If the given in itself is a chaos of presentations and presented relations and the mind works upon it as an instrument, there must be something over and above the mind in order to convert the chaos into a cosmic order. In that case, the mind cannot be said to be the builder of the cosmos as Stace presumes. The function of the mind is limited and it cannot bring an order where there is a chaos. We get a testimony to this fact in the Sankhya philosophy which recognizes higher categories than mind.

(b) Reality is something more than presentations and it cannot be conceived : Secondly, what is behind the world of presentation is not the given but the Reality which cannot be comprehended by means of concepts. Hence, the more we advance in conceptual thinking the more we forget the world of presentations, and the nearer we come to Reality, the more we forget even our concepts. Reality cannot be realized so long as we identify ourselves with the given or with the concepts. Reality can be comprehended only by intuitive insight which is not a mere function of the mind. We cannot be said to have even a knowledge of Reality, but we can avow that the moment It is realized Wisdom dawns on us automatically and this Wisdom may also be termed as Enlightenment.

Now, we are able to assert that this Enlightenment is an outcome of revelation and intuition. There is here no difference between intuition and revelation provided we mean by intuition the highest type of spiritual insight and not as it is used in ordinary psychology. Before we go to examine the concept of revelation and intuition as independent sources of knowledge, let us analyse what are the other possible sources of knowledge and how far they are reliable. Here, I wish to confine myself to the account given by W. M. P. Montague in his very thought-provoking book, *The Ways of Knowing*.

Montague divides his book into two parts — the first part dealing with Logic (which according to him is confined to the ways of attaining knowledge) and the second part with epistemology (which he calls as the ways of interpreting knowledge). My scope is limited to the ways of attaining rather than to the interpretation of knowledge.

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Montague examines six types of logical theories, viz. Authoritarianism, Mysticism, Rationalism, Empiricism, Pragmatism and Scepticism. Out of these, I wish to concentrate my attention on the first four leaving untouched the last two. For, pragmatism is very often exploded by constructive philosophers who say that this method cannot help us in attaining knowledge; and as for scepticism, if it is regarded as a doubting philosophy, it can lead us nowhere. Now let us proceed to explore the regions of other knowledge and see how far they are reliable.

(*To be continued*)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

The report of the talk by Swami Vivekananda, which appears in this issue, so far unpublished in any book, has been made available to us through the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, New York.

Sri Abinash Chandra Bose is from New Delhi.

Swami Nikhilananda, whose *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (a translation of the Master's teachings from Bengali) is so widely read and who has made available in English the eleven major Upanishads and other works, is the Head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, New York.

Sri M. V. Bhide, I.C.S. (Retd.) is from Poona.

Sri Bangovinda Parampanthi is from Dibrugarh, Assam.

Sri R. S. Murti is from Perianaickenpalayam, Coimbatore.

Sri K. R. Venkatasubramanian is from Kalimpong.

STUDENT INDISCIPLINE: ITS CAUSES AND REMEDY

Today the Indian student community suffers from the malignant fever of indiscipline. Rarely a year passes by without demonstrations or strikes by the students in one University or other, in one college or other. Commissions that were appointed to institute inquiries into the disturbances have deliberated sufficiently and reported exactly as the matters stood with their own suggestions for the solution. Their purview was limited to the immediate cause and detecting the immediate culprits. Consequently the remedies too were only for the time being. But no research was ever undertaken to know the real causes and prescribe the true remedies. It might also be possible that those who probed into the matter thought that the remedy they would prescribe will be branded as old fashioned and crude and thus remained silent. Time has now come that we should be frank and open. We should ask ourselves whether we want this canker to be removed from our midst or not. If we truly want it to be wiped out, we have to apply the remedy even if it is old fashioned. We are not concerned with a particular case here or there but about the general indiscipline.

Let us first of all take up the state of society from which the students are produced, for there is no use slinging mud at the students alone, as, much depends upon the atmosphere in which they are brought up. Today man runs after lucre more than anything else. He has become too selfish to look to the needs of others. Even his own parents and children do not get the attention they deserve and that is due to them. Old infirm parents are either left in the lurch to look after themselves or some pittance is sent them at the end of each month. Never a thought crosses man's mind to treat them more humanely. The old idea of service to the parents is completely forgotten. What about the children? Either the servants

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have to look after them or they have to look after themselves, the lady of the house is at first too weak to take care of them and later too busy attending social functions, political meetings or dinner parties. For does she not live in the twentieth century, should she be tied down to the household? That is the trend of events, the result is that the children grow up without any direction and without any love. What wonder then that they disobey the parents? What have the parents taught them, in what love have they brought them up that they demand obedience? And what is learnt in the house is brought to the school and later to the college. Who is to be blamed for all this, the student or the parents?

Now compare this with what we meet in our epics. The primary concern of a woman is the welfare of her husband and children, the way she should equip her children to be useful to the society. She, by her actions as well as precepts sets an example, an ideal, for her children. The story of Queen Madalasa is very illustrative of this. Swami Vivekananda has related it very beautifully and briefly thus :

> 'There was once a Hindu queen, who so much desired that all her children should attain freedom in this life that she herself took all the care of them; and as she rocked them to sleep, she sang always the one song to them — "Tat twam asi, Tat twam asi." ("That thou art, That thou art.") Three of them became Sannyasins, but the fourth was taken away to be brought up elsewhere to become a king. As he was leaving home, the mother gave him a piece of paper which he was to read when he grew to manhood. On that piece of paper was written, "God alone is true. All else is false. The soul never kills or is killed. Live alone or in the company of holy ones." When the young prince read this, he too at once renounced the world and became a Sannyasin.'

So solicitous was the mother about the children, therefore she had nothing to regret. The children instinctively absorbed the ideas of their parents and learned to be unselfish instead of assertive, humble instead of arrogant, self-sacrificing instead of self-seeking. Bred in such an atmosphere the children grew to be dutiful as we see in the case of the Rishi's son in the Ramayana whose thought even at his dying moment was about his old, infirm, blind parents that were left in the Ashrama. A butcher too, of the Mahabharata, is not devoid of this discipline. He too served his parents and by the merit of his service was endowed with the knowledge of the Highest, Brahman.

Let the present generation of parents inculcate these ideas upon their own minds, assimilate them in their life and be shining examples to their own children and then everything will go on smoothly. It is not our contention that the whole country is devoid of such parents but that wherever such trouble is noticeable, there we can say that all the fault do not lie with the student alone, at least some of it is due to the atmosphere in which he was reared up.

Another factor that contributes to the discipline of a student is the life of the teacher under whom he studies, with whom he has the opportunity to come in close contact, and unless that life is ideal there is every possibility of the student going astray. Let there be no mercenary attitude in the teacher and at the same time let him be very deep, well versed in his subject so that the academic level may go up. We are sure that an earnest and sympathetic teacher draws as much attention and respect of the pupil as the loving mother does at home. Therefore instead of trying to shift the burden of responsibility to the student alone let the parents and the teachers realise their share of it and carry it out ably. This will go a long way, than mere sermons.

It is a matter of regret that today educational institutions are more or less run on a commercial basis throughout the world. The result as we see is disastrous. Just as the morale at home may improve if the parents are imbued with the spirit of dedication to the welfare of the children, so the same may undergo a change for the better in our 'temples of learning' — schools, colleges and uni-

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versities — if (1) only competent persons with a touch of the spirit of dedication are appointed to play the difficult role of teachers, (2) commercialism with the goal for money and material prospects is altogether eliminated, and (3) the teachers be given sufficient scope to teach the students efficiently and live an exemplary life. Remember Swami Vivekananda's words of wisdom relevant to this, 'Knowledge should be imparted by the Tyagis — (men of renunciation) and on national lines independent of any foreign influence.' The Utopia of the Gurukula system will never materialise otherwise.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE NEW INDIAN STATES. By M. K. Gandhi. Compiled by R. K. Prabhu. Published by the Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad-14. Pp. 40. 25 nP.

This small brochure brings home the considered views of Gandhiji on the problems facing the Indian states. Gandhiji had been very emphatic then, over certain issues which have been the topic of much heated discussions during the recent years. Referring to the linguistic redistribution, he states 'I believe that the linguistic basis is the correct basis for demarcating provinces... The redistribution of provinces on a linguistic basis is necessary if provincial languages are to grow to their full height... To go to a third party in the shape of Boundary Commission for a settlement would be a negation of independence... They must evolve inter-dependence and mutual help'. Adverting to the bane of provincialism and the language issue he has said that in his opinion an Indian was a citizen of India enjoying equal rights in every part of India... All were servants of India and they lived only in the spirit of service. Inter-provincial language can only be Hindustani written in Nagari or Urdu script. Provincial Governments can devise a method in order to enable the people in those provinces to feel that they have come into their own. My plea is for banishing English as a cultural usurper as we successfully banished the political rule of the English usurper. The rich English language will ever retain its natural place as the inter-national speech of commerce and diplomacy.' Writing on religion, he points out, 'religion is a personal matter which should have no place in politics. The conduct of a congressman in an Assembly would have to be that of strictest honesty and courtesy in dealing with his opponents.' Referring to Trials by Jury, he states, 'I am unconvinced of the advantages of Jury trials over those by judges ...what we must aim at is an incorruptible impartial and able judiciary right from the bottom.' Referring to civil disobediences, he holds the opinion firmly that 'civil disobedience is the purest type of constitutional agitaion... To put down civil disobedience is to attempt to imprison conscience.' Goondas, he says, are the product of social disorganisation and society is therefore responsible for their existence. In other words, they should be looked upon as a symptom of corruption in our body politic. There are many other such pithy sayings and remarks which appear to hold good for all at all times.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

AIR MISCELLANY, 1960. Publications Division, Government of India, New Delhi. Pp. 156. Price Rs. 2.75.

Though a government publication this book is most interesting reading from cover to cover. And it is enlightening too. Here is a careful compilation of select talks (46 of them) broadcast on the All India Radio during the last year, arranged subjectwise e.g. Philosophy and History, Literature and Arts, Current Affairs and Science, Indian Life and Lore, Experience and Reminiscence. The talks are mostly by competent authorities in their fields like K. A. Nilakanta Sastri on History, Verrier Elwin on Indian Folk Poetry, S. Chandrasekhar on Population Problem, M. Krishnan on Elephants and so on.

Readers of this Journal would agree with the conclusion of Rohit Mehta, speaking of the progress made by Modern Science in Parasychology and ESP, that what is important and urgent is not "the quantitative expansion of sense-data but a qualitative expansion of consciousness." Mr. Mehta's plea for the imperative necessity of growth into a faculty higher than mind if man is to understand and master both himself and Nature is convincing.

The subject of student-unrest in India comes in for attention in many of these talks.

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Mr. T. K. N. Menon points out that 'for every three hours of study that a student in the United States or the United Kingdom puts in outside the class-room, his Indian counterpart studies only for an hour.' He urges a restricted admission to the Universities, a modification of the present system of examinations which promotes frustration and above all provision of expert advice to students on curricular, personal and occupational problems. Dr C. P. Ramaswami Iyer calls for a resuscitation of the spirit of our old Gurukuls.

M. P. PANDIT

84 NOT OUT: By R. P. Paranjpye. (Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, Delhi-6.) Pages 184. Price Rs. 1.75.

The National Book Trust of India has been functioning now for a few years since its inception with creditable achievements in the matter of publication of worthwhile literature. No doubt the volume under review is one of the valuable additions to the list.

Dr Paranjpye, the educationist of renown and integrity, has had a brilliant record of academic honours, having become a Senior Wrangler of Cambridge University. As a mathematician of rank, a professor of great experience in handling students, a vice-chancellor of more than one Indian University and an administrator as Minister of the Bombay State, Dr Paranjpye really discloses a lot of useful information that can instruct the publicists of to-day who have very little knowledge of useful studies and very meagre education in public life. His candour in dealing with himself bears the stamp of a man of precise expression and principled outlook. Yet as an autobiography the book has little to enliven readers eager for personal anecdotes and literary craftsmanship. Nevertheless it is an unvarnished tale told with a sense of responsibility for truth and factual correctness apart from an enduring restraint in the narration of one's own life.

K. CHANDRASEKHARAN

SPINOZA IN THE LIGHT OF THE VEDANTA: By R. K. Tripathi, M.A., D.Litt. Banaras Hindu University Darsana Series, Banaras. Pp. 322. Price Rs. 10.

As the Editor of this series observes in his Foreword, this critical study of Spinoza constitutes an outstanding contribution to comparative philosophy. It is an attempt to establish that Spinoza's philosophy is the same as that of Advaita Vedanta. The author explains that it is only the Advaita Vedanta interpretation that would explain many of the inconsistencies which had been a puzzle to Spinoza's readers. Comparative studies like the present book have their advantages and at the same time their limitations. The doctrines of a great Teacher suggest more than what they actually convey and in Spinoza also this is the same position. A master mind is not merely a rubber stamp absorbing and giving out the views of others; it has its own individuality and nuance and these may be taken for what they are. Dr Tripathi makes it clear that Spinoza should not be regarded as a product of historical evolution. Though this is true to a great extent, we should note that it should not be taken as completely true. The genius of a philosopher though he may be an epoch-maker is unconsciously oriented by the culture, ethos and other factors like training etc. of his age and Spinoza was no exception.

Dr Tripathi discusses critically Spinoza's theory of substance, attributes and modes and points out that his pure substance is the pure being of Advaita which is absolutely indeterminate, immanent and transcendent. He points out that unlike the Advaitin, Spinoza does not identify the pure substance with the Self and that secondly he does not realise that Pure Being could not be defined through only positive categories. The most crucial problem of philosophy, is the problem of creation and it is the author's contention that far from the general view that Spinoza has failed to answer this question satisfactorily, he has actually followed the path of the Vedanta and has almost argued that changes are illusory. No doubt for the Advaitin, the vivarta vada is the *deus ex machina* enabling him to retain the Nirguna Brahman and at the same time keep the apparent reality of the finite world intact. The finite is merely the appearance and not the creation of the absolute. But Spinoza did not explicitly deny the reality of the finite things and hence he had to contend against the reality, partial and limited it may be, of the finite world. To his credit it must be said that Spinoza did not retain the reality of the finite by making God the aggregate of finite facts. And because his pure Being was an abstraction arrived at by the elimination of determinate contents he was not able to derive the finite from the infinite. Spinoza could probably have cut the Gordian knot by boldly denying the changing finite as the Advaitin has done but he did not, with the result that he has simply left the finite without any real

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explanation. Much of the interpretation of the finite and infinite modes of Spinoza by the author seems to be special pleading with a bias in favour of Advaita. Dr Tripathi finally discusses critically Spinoza's treatment of the human mind, bondage and freedom and eternity of man.

The author deserves great credit for his thorough study of this 'God-intoxicated Philosopher' and his treatment of the subject is clear, lucid and persuasive. The comparative approach has enabled the author to clarify some of the doctrines of the Advaita Vedanta in connection with his explanation of the Spinozistic concepts. As the author himself says this book will have served its purpose if it succeeds in broadening our outlook and deepening our sympathies.

S. RAJAGOPALA SASTRI.

STRIKES: By M. K. Gandhi. Compiled by Ravindra Kelekar. Pp. 32. Price 30 nP. Navajivan Publishing House. Ahmedabad-14.

This is what one might call, a digest of the views expressed from time to time by Mahatma Gandhi, on 'Strikes', which had been characterised by him so early as in 1946 as a 'universal plague'. The reader is enabled to appraise clearly the mutual duties and obligations between the employer and the employed, which he has set out, and which remain even to this day, the most practicable solution of a most baffling problem.

S. RAJAGOPALAN.

SRIMAD BHAGAVAD GITA WITH SADHANA VYAKHYA: By Sri S. Subba Rao, M.A. Pp. 339. Price Rs. 1.50 (The Gita Pracharaka Sangham, 3998, Market Street, Secunderabad).

This beautifully got-up treatise on the Holy Gita, is a welcome addition to the literature on the subject and the fact that the author has himself been a Karma Yogi, invests both the translation and the commentary on each verse, with a special value of their own. As the author rightly observes in his valuable introduction, the core of the Gita is Brahma Vidya applied to daily life and conduct or metaphysics in action. 'Draw from the invisible and serve the visible, in a spirit of perfect detachment.'

The translation is perfectly clear and intelligible. Examples drawn from every day life and the sayings and incidents in the lives of Sages (P. 63) add to the worth of the commentaries. One can instance in this connection the happy rendering of sloka 69 in Chapter II of the Gita: 'Ordinary human beings are awake to the world and its pleasures, but are asleep to God. A Realised Soul, however, is asleep in respect of worldly matters but is fully awake to divine realities'.

S. RAJAGOPALAN.

SOUVENIR OF SRI SARADA SANGHA 1961: Pp. 128.

The Sarada Sangha, an all-India body of lady devotees of the Holy Mother, Sri Sarada Devi, held its annual conference this year in Trichur and in commemoration published from its Calicut Branch this souvenir. It has tried to give the public a general idea of its activities in different centres in this brochure. Articles on the lives of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother and other subjects of religious and social importance are thought provoking. Some articles in Malayalam and one in Hindi have also been included.

PUSHPANJALI — TO THE FEET OF DIVINE MOTHER: By H. R. Akkapeddy. Author & Publisher, Burma Shell Depot, Bhimavaram, West Godavari Dt. Pages 103. Price Re. 1.

This small book is divided into three sections, with 108 verses in easy English, speaking of various precepts to ascend the ladder that leads to Supreme Bliss.

T. S. RAGHAVAN

BULLETIN OF THE INSTITUTE OF TRADITIONAL CULTURES, MADRAS. Part I, MCMLXI. Pages 202. Price Rs. 4.

The Bulletin under notice bears, in addition to its usual features, interesting articles on the first hand study of Kandyan Dance by Dr M. D. Raghavan, an excellent account by Sri S. V. Sahasranamam, the Tamil actor, of his impressions of the theatre and the drama in the Soviet Union and East Germany which is, no doubt, particularly useful in the present context of "great awareness for the stage and artists and their profession". More than this, the number reveals an astonishing account of the marvellous and prodigious memory in reciting traditional vedic, Vishnusahasranama stotra and Bhagavadgita texts in different ways. The account on the proceedings of the Seminar on Kathakali in its various aspects, is the most informative, and illuminative discussion. It is hoped that the Institute will endeavour more in revealing the hidden treasures of our land.

T. S. RAGHAVAN

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KANNADA

KIRTANA SANGHRAHA: Published by Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bangalore-19. Pp. 248. Pocket size in one volume. Price Rs. 2.50 and in parts 1, 2 & 3, Re. 0.50, Re. 1.00, and Re. 1.00 respectively.

This is the third impression of the book since it was first published in 1954 and shows its popularity among the Kannada speaking people. It is a good collection of songs from Bengali, Hindi, Kannada, Telugu and Sanskrit on Shiva, Devi, Rama, Hari, Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, Swami Vivekananda etc. The tune and time in which each song is sung is given at the top of the song making them easy of adaptation by musicians. The books with their board binding are made to stand daily use. The size of the book suits the pocket enabling easy handling.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Hanumat Stava Mandalam (Telugu): Published by Ramatirtha Sevashrama, Piduguralla P.O., Guntur Dt., Andhra. Pp. 47.

Dharmanirnayamandalka Panchanga (Hindi): By Pundit Raghunathshastri Kokaji, Secretary, Dharma Nirnaya Mandal, P.O. Lonavla, Dt. Poona. Price 50 nP.

An Appeal to Thoughtful Vedantins: Published by Adhyatma Prakash Karyalaya, Holenarsipur. Pp. 20.

Ten Witnesses (East and West Series): By T. L. Vaswani. Published by Gita Publishing House, 10, Connaught Road, Poona-1. Pp. 74. Price Re. 1.

Voluntary Poverty: By M. K. Gandhi. Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad-14. Pp. 30. Price 25 nP.

NEWS AND REPORTS

VEDANTA SEMINAR AT THOUSAND ISLAND PARK, NEW YORK

At Thousand Island Park, a beautiful summer resort of New York State, there stands atop a hillock, surrounded by an oak forest, a cottage which was sanctified by Swami Vivekananda's stay for seven weeks in 1895. In what an exalted spiritual mood the Swamiji was while living in this cottage is evident from the *Inspired Talks* he gave here to a group of intimate students. Here, again, he composed his famous 'Song of the Sannyasin' and also did much thinking in regard to his work in India. Moreover, here he also experienced the nirvikalpa samadhi. This place is therefore rightly considered a great place of pilgrimage for all Vedantins in the Western Hemisphere.

The cottage, now known as 'Vivekananda Cottage,' is run by the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center of New York. To this place the Swamis of that Center make an annual summer pilgrimage and pass their time in contemplative retirement. Swamis from other Centres in America and also students of Vedanta visit it from time to time during this season.

In a place like this it is only natural that Vedantic studies should continue. Last year, for about two weeks, Swami Nikhilananda conducted a seminar here and expounded the *Vedantasara* to a group of students. This summer, for two weeks from the 2nd to the 15th of August, he explained selections from the Upanishads to a group of twenty-six students who came from such widely separated areas as Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Virginia, and from Canada as well. Some of the students drove by motor for two days to reach the place, and all devoted a good part of their yearly vacation to this study.

During the days of the seminar the students listened to the exposition of the Upanishads for about an hour and a half each morning, and had their questions answered. In the afternoon they attended the *aratrikam* in the shrine (which is the room used by Swami Vivekananda while he stayed in the cottage), singing hymns to the Lord and afterwards joining in meditation. Since Swami Madhavananda was also passing the summer at Thousand Island Park, a number of them availed themselves of the rare opportunity of cultivating holy company.

THE VEDANTA SOCIETY OF ST. LOUIS

Report for 1960

1. *Sunday Services*: Swami Satprakashananda who is in charge of the Center spoke on different religious and philosophical topics in the Society's chapel on Sunday mornings. The services were open to the general public. Members and students of different churches, educational centers, and cultural groups also attended. Total number of Sunday services 46.

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2. *Meditation and Discourse*: On Tuesday evenings the Swami conducted a meditation and gave a discourse on Srimad Bhagavatam, Chapter XI. He answered questions after the discourse. Students from Washington University and other educational and religious centers also came to the meetings. Total number of Tuesday meetings 46. Meditation was also conducted on special occasions. The chapel was open for silent meditation on week-days from 11 a.m. to 12 noon.

3. *Additional Meetings*: Special meetings were held in Society's chapel for senior High School students on two different occasions. The Swami explained to them the Hindu View of Life and answered questions.

4. *Anniversaries*: On the birth anniversaries of Sri Krishna, Buddha, Sankara, Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Brahmananda, and on special festive occasions, such as the worship of the Divine Mother, Christmas, and Easter, special meditation, devotional worship, chanting of hymns, and services for the public were conducted. A Hindu dinner was served on Sri Ramakrishna's birthday. On all other occasions refreshments were served.

5. *The Vedanta Group Meets During the Summer Recess*: The Vedanta group met every Sunday morning and Tuesday evening during August and the first part of September while the regular services were suspended. On Sundays they listened to the Swami's recorded lectures. On Tuesday evenings they read from the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna. Each meeting opened with a prayer and meditation.

6. *Out-of-town Guests and Visitors*: The Society had the privilege of receiving about thirty guests and visitors from many different places. Most of them interviewed the Swami and attended the services. Some came to St. Louis with the special purpose of seeing him. In most cases the guests had dinner with the Swami.

7. *Interviews*: The Swami gave eighty-five private interviews. Most of the interviewers came for spiritual inspiration and for discussion of their personal problems.

8. *Library*: The lending library was well utilised by the members and friends of the Society.

9. *Extension of the Vedanta Work in Kansas City, Missouri, and Vicinity*: In Kansas City, Missouri, where the work has extended, other than the fortnightly meetings of the Vedanta group, open meetings are held once a month with the tape recordings of the Swami's Sunday lectures delivered in St. Louis. A majority of the group are members of the St. Louis Vedanta Society. The work has been growing steadily.

RAMAKRISHNA-SIVANANDA ASHRAM, BARASET

REPORT FOR 1959-1960

The Ashrama celebrated the anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, disciples of Ramakrishna, Durga Puja, Shyama Puja and religious festivals. Sittings were held every evening at which readings from scriptures were given by scholars. Bhajan and Kirtan recitals were held from time to time. Free medical advice and medicines were given from the homoeopathic dispensary maintained by the Ashrama to out-door patients. The total number of patients treated was 4,657. The foundation stone was laid on March 2, 1960 for building a Temple to be named 'Ramakrishna-Sivananda Mandira', which has since been opened.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH, MADRAS.

SRI KRISHNA JAYANTI, 1961

The birthday of Sri Krishna was observed on Friday, 1st September, 1961 at the Math. After Arati, Swami Paramatmananda read and explained the birth of Sri Krishna from the Bhagavata, for nearly an hour. The worship of Sri Krishna in the spacious hall started at 9 p.m. and came to a close after *homa* at about 1-30 a.m. The public celebration which came off on 3rd was addressed by Sri J. Satyanarayanamurthi, M.A., B.L. in English. While dwelling on the unique contribution of Sri Krishna to the philosophical thought of the world he also explained the meaning of Navaneetachora beautifully, as the stealer of extraneous matter that has entered into the pure soul, which the word itself indicates by its meaning in Sanskrit, and said that the word, navaneetachora, did not simply mean a butter-thief in the case of Sri Krishna. After a vote of thanks by Prof. T. R. Raghava Shastri the meeting came to a close.

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.... Be bold and face
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease.
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XLVIII NOVEMBER 1961 No. 7

FROM THE TREE OF DIVINE LORE

The crown'd Eternal-One, — King of th' immortal host, —
the rapturous Dancer, as the six sects homage pay,
Ascends the boat, accepts and crowns their service due;
while heaven and earth adore and praise their King.
He grants infirmity should die! — In Perun-turrai's shrine
He dwells in mighty grace!—In love to Her, His bride,
He brought a jewelled net, to catch the mystic fish!
His ways who know, with our supernal Lord are one!

His breast wears garlands of the opening cassia flower; —
Hero, He slew the tiger strong of claw; —
The Partner He of Umai, lovely Queen; —
of Perun-turrai, girt with rich groves, King; —
Isan, in great and spotless glory bright; —
He folds the beauteous ones in soft embrace; —
He to the vast sea's king in fiery form appeared; —
His form who know, shall union gain with our supernal Lord!

Our mighty Lord with pure white ashes decked; —
Who came Bright Ruler of Mahandiram; —
Isan, whose planted foot the gods adore; —
the southern Ruler, Perun-turrai's King; —
Who loving pity showed to me that day,
showed me His jewelled Foot to melt my soul,
My sorrows soothed, in grace made me His own!
His deeds who know, with our supernal Lord are one!

(Manikka-Vacagar: *Tiruvacagam*, from pp. 320-23.)

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MAN IN QUEST OF HAPPINESS

Desire for happiness is intrinsic with embodied beings. Man is no exception to the rule. The quest for happiness has been the motive power which has been driving him to seek new avenues. The strenuous efforts that he puts forth in the fields temporal or spiritual are only to obtain the unalloyed and everlasting bliss. All his discoveries in the realm of science have been for this purpose. Today if man desires to gain supremacy over the natural forces and subjugate them, it is only with this end in view. If in the past or even in the present some few deviate from the path of the majority and avoid worldliness it is also in search of felicity. It therefore behoves us to dispassionately investigate into these divergent presentations, before we launch our boat into the deep ocean of this world.

The concept of happiness varies with individuals according to their outlook on life, but broadly they can be classified into two types; those with whom happiness means sense pleasures, such as eating, drinking, name, fame, and all that this world can give, and those others, though a microscopic minority, with whom felicity is something divine, too sacred and too lofty to be mixed up with or attributed to things mundane. Sri Ramakrishna classifies men into four classes: those bound by the fetters of the world, the seekers after liberation, the liberated, and the ever-free. He categorises happiness as: (1) *vishayananda* (pleasure of the senses), (2) *bhajanananda* (pleasure in doing spiritual practices) and (3) *Brahmananda* (Divine Bliss). The last of these may be experienced in realising God with form, as in the case of the devotees (*bhaktas*), or in realisation of the formless aspect of God, as in the case of *jnanis*.

Among the first type of men, viz. the bound, there are again two categories: those who are ignorant of anything higher than their senses or minds steeped in worldliness could grasp and those others who though aware of a higher ideal find it hard to break off from the roots of worldliness they had allowed to grow. The former are like the fish, in Sri Ramakrishna's parable, which though caught in the net of the fisherman, burrows itself deeper into the mire with the net in its mouth and feels itself secure and happy, while the latter class of people feel the transitoriness of the worldly enjoyments and know that they are bound to land them into untold misery but are lured by the attraction of the world and are bound hand and foot. They are like the water-snake trying to swallow a mole, neither able to swallow it nor give it up.

For a discriminating person, where is happiness in the sense contacts? They are all momentary, he perceives it. Discrimination means to know the distinction between the Real and the unreal, the Eternal and the transitory. The taste of a delicious dish is no more felt when that morsel leaves the tongue and even the morsel which remains for an inordinately long time on the tongue loses its flavour, demonstrating the fickleness of these pleasures. Further how much can a man eat? Any excessive indulgence immediately brings in reaction and results in misery in the form of disease and mental depression. Even so is the case with all other pleasures born of sense contacts. There is a beautiful piece of advice in Sanskrit

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which warns man of infatuation of wealth.

'Misery there is in earning wealth and misery in protecting what is amassed and still more miserable does one feel when one has to spend what one has amassed. Fie on such wealth which is a source of misery.'[1]

King Bhartrihari decries the sense enjoyments in his Vairagyasatakam:

'We did not enjoy the pleasures but were ourselves enjoyed by them (i.e. by the endless anxiety in seeking those pleasures all our energy was sapped).'[2]

The idea is that we suffer more than we enjoy in seeking pleasures of this phenomenal world. Sri Krishna stresses this in the Gita:

'Whatever enjoyments that are born of contact with something outside (in the world) are all only a source of misery. They have got a beginning and an end and therefore, O Son of Kunti, a wise one does not revel in them.'[3]

Yet man runs after them and is madly engrossed in them. Sri Ramakrishna describes the condition of this class of people with great pathos thus:

'The bound creatures, entangled in worldliness, will not come to their senses at all. They suffer so much misery and agony, they face so many dangers, and yet they will not wake up. The camel loves to eat thorny bushes. The more it eats the thorns the more the blood gushes from its mouth. Still it must eat thorny plants and will never give them up. The man of worldly nature suffers so much sorrow and affliction, but he forgets it all in a few days and begins his old life over again. Suppose a man has lost his wife or she has turned unfaithful. Lo! He marries again. Or take the instance of a mother; her son dies and she suffers bitter grief; but after a few days she forgets all about it. The mother, so overwhelmed with sorrow a few days before, now attends to her toilet and puts on her jewelry. A father becomes bankrupt through the marriage of his daughters, yet he goes on having children year after year. People are ruined by litigation, yet they go to court all the same.'

We have seen how when discriminated the worldly pleasures turn out to be but an empty show, uncertainty and impermanence being all their worth. Happiness of a permanent nature is not to be found in name and fame, scholarship and ability at exposition, even of scriptures. Narada, himself a divine sage, who knew all the sciences, and shastras approaches Sanatkumara and says:

"'O, revered one, please teach me.' The teacher asked, 'now tell me what you already know and I shall tell you that which you do not know.' To which Narada replies: 'I know the Rig-Veda, the Yajur-Veda, the Sama-Veda, the Atharva-Veda as the fourth, Ithihasa as the fifth, Puranas, the rules of sacrifice for the Manes, the science of numbers, astrology, the sciences of time, logic, ethics, etymology, Brahma-vidya (the science of pronunciation, prosody etc. connected with the Vedas), the science of the spirits, science of weapons, astronomy, the science of serpents and the science of fine arts. Yet, O, revered Sir, I only know the word and the rituals and do not know the Atman. But I have heard from persons like you that a knower of Atman goes across this ocean of misery. I am

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[1] अर्थानामार्जने दुःखमार्जितानां च रक्षणे।
रक्षितानां व्यये दुःखं धिगर्थं दुःखभाजनम्॥

[2] भोगा न भुक्ता वयमेव भुक्ताः।

[3] ये हि संस्पर्शजा भोगा दुःखयोनय एव ते।
आद्यन्तवन्तः कौन्तेय न तेषु रमते बुधः॥

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full of sorrow so please ferry me across.'"[4]

If there was happiness in scholarship Narada with his vast knowledge should have been the happiest of all but he was not. He felt the want of something which was the essence of happiness. Where then lies happiness, true and everlasting? The last line in Narada's reply gives an indication of it: in Atma-Vidya or Brahma-Vidya, the experience of one's own Self or Brahman, and that is why the sages who lived thousands of years before us, set a separate norm for those who sought that Infinite Bliss. They too had sought pleasure elsewhere than this world, viz. in the first instance in the heavens and finding even those pleasures as ephemeral as obtained here in this world, turned later in the direction of that One, whose very nature was Bliss Absolute. And when they saw Him, and experienced Him their very beings were pervaded with an immense bliss, of which they had no notion before and for which they were vainly seeking in this and the other worlds. After such an experience they declared that what happiness this world could give was as a vacuum compared to the immense and unalloyed bliss of Brahman and which, a knower of Brahman can experience even here in this world. The Taittiriya Upanishad gives us an account of how vast such bliss is: calculated, it is some millions of billions times what a youthful and noble king in possession of all the wealth of the world, (well versed in the Vedas), firm in body and strong in mind can enjoy. It is a figure that can only be written but the vastness of which is incomprehensible. Those who attained it were so enraptured that they desired not to return to the sense plane again. Only a very few of those who enjoyed the divine bliss and were divinely commissioned returned to report to humanity about the existence of a superior type of bliss and wean it to the right path. There is a parable of Sri Ramakrishna which is poignantly expressive of this idea.

'Once four friends, in the course of a walk saw a place enclosed by a high wall. They all became eager to know what was inside. Three of them, one after the other, climbed the wall, saw the field, burst into loud laughter and dropped to the other side. These three could not give any information about what was inside. Only the fourth man came back and told people about it. He is like those who retain their bodies, even after attaining *Brahmajnana,* in order to teach others.'

Such is the lure of the Divine that when a person sees Him he forgets everything else, the world with all its kaleidoscopic pictures holds no more attraction for him.

An incident connected with the life of Sri Ramakrishna will illustrate this: Mathurnath Biswas, a son-in-law of Rani Rasmani, wanted Sri Ramakrishna to put him into samadhi. Sri Ramakrishna tried to dissuade him by warning him that he would not be able to look after his vast estates and do such other worldly activities once he felt the supreme bliss of *Bhavasamadhi.* But Mathurnath persisted in his impor-

[4] अधीहि भगव इति होपससाद सनत्कुमारं नारदस्तं होवाच यद्वेत्थ तेन मोपसीद ततस्त ऊर्ध्वं वक्ष्यामीति सहोवाच। ऋग्वेदं भगवोऽध्येमि यजुर्वेदं सामवेदमाथर्वणं चतुर्थमितिहासपुराणं पंचमं वेदानां वेदं पित्र्यं राशिं दैवं निधिं वाकोवाक्यमेकायनं देवविद्यां ब्रह्मविद्यां भूतविद्यां क्षत्रविद्यां नक्षत्रविद्यां सर्पदेवजनविद्यामेतद्भगवोऽध्येमि। सोऽहं भगवो मंत्रविदेवास्मि नात्मविच्छ्रुतं ह्येव मे भगवादृशेभ्यस्तरति शोकमात्मविदिति सोऽहं भगवः शोचामि तं मा भगवान्शोकस्य पारं तारयतु।

Chand. U. 7.1.1-3.

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tunity. At last when all arguments failed to convince Mathur, Sri Ramakrishna said, 'I shall tell Mother and She will do whatever She likes.' In a few days Mathur had his wish fulfilled but he found it impossible to think of anything except God. He then sent for Sri Ramakrishna and when the latter came, he narrated his experiences and requested him to relieve him of his ecstasy. 'There was bliss in it' he said 'but on this side it was all going to pieces.' So Sri Ramakrishna had to withdraw it. The *Bhagavad Gitā* too says :

> 'The sense objects turn back from a person abstaining from food but the longing for enjoyment still lingers in him. Even that vanishes when one has the vision of the Supreme.' [5]

Now what is this Supreme, what is this Atman, knowing which one goes across the ocean of misery and how to know and experience it ? Our scriptures say It is Sat, Chit and Ananda i.e. Absolute Existence, Knowledge and Bliss. Further they say that, It is that from which the world has emanated, in which it has its being and to which it will return.[6] Again our sages say that what happiness we experience here is also due to the fact that it has emanated from that vast reservoir of bliss. Compared to the bliss of Brahman or Atman the happiness of the world is nothing and that is why the Upanishads say :

> 'That which is Infinite that only is Bliss, there is no bliss in any thing lesser than that, therefore this Infinite is to be inquired into.' [7]

In this word *alpa*, lesser (limited) is included everything that is not Brahman, even the highest heavens. These heavens and enjoyments create only fresh desires ; which remain unsatisfied due to the several limitations : of the heavens and of the enjoyer himself. These desires bring in their train misery and never has misery been seen to generate bliss in this world says Sri Sankara commenting on this verse. Again the *Kathopanishad* says :

> Those brave ones who see that One Lord, — Who is all pervading, independent, to Whom there is no peer, Who is the controller of all the universe being the indwelling spirit of all and Who manifests Himself in diverse forms,—to be residing in one's own self to them alone belongs the eternal bliss and none else. Those brave ones who see, that One —Who is the eternal amongst ephemeral, Who is the consciousness of the conscious, Who is the One dispenser of the fruits of actions of the many,—in their own Self to them only is the eternal peace and to none else. [8]

When can we realise this Atman, or in what state do we become completely blissful ? That state is described in the

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[5] विषया विनिवर्तन्ते निराहारस्य देहिनः ।
रसवर्जं रसोऽप्यस्य परं दृष्ट्वा निवर्तते ॥
Gita, 2-59.

[6] यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते । येन जातानि जीवन्ति । यत्प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्ति ॥
Taittiriya U. 3. 1.

[7] यो वै भूमा तत्सुखं नाल्पे सुखमस्ति भूमावेव सुखं भूमात्वेव विजिज्ञासितव्यः ।
Chand. U. 7-23-1.

[8] एको वशी सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा
एकं रूपं बहुधा यः करोति ।
तमात्मस्थं येऽनुपश्यन्ति
धीरास्तेषां सुखं शाश्वतं नेतरेषाम् ॥
नित्योऽनित्यानां चेतनश्चेतनाना-
मेको बहूनां यो विदधाति कामान् ।
तमात्मस्थं येऽनुपश्यन्ति धीरा-
स्तेषां शान्तिः शाश्वती नेतरेषाम् ॥
Katha. U. V. 12-13.

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Chandogya Upanishad. This Atman, it says, is realised in that state when one does not see a second one, does not hear a second one, does not comprehend a second one i.e. when everything of this world which exist as name and form gets merged into that One. And that state in which one sees another, hears another and knows another, is the lower, the lesser, or the limited state. Bhuma is immortal and therefore what is lesser is mortal, ephemeral. 'This Atman is your own Self' says the same Upanishad, *Tattwamasi.* If it is our own self why can't we apprehend it? Because we have identified ourselves with something which is not the Atman, i.e. the body, the senses, the mind etc. The body, the senses, the mind etc. are working because of *Its* existence in the body. When that Atman leaves, all the functions of the body also cease.

How is it to be realised? The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* says,

> 'The Atman is to be seen. It should be heard, from a competent person, the *acharya* and the scriptures, should be discussed about, and then should be deeply pondered over, meditated upon.'[9]

In this way only will realisation of our true nature, which is bliss, will dawn on us and not by mere hearing and once when this realisation is ours, we shall see that Eternal Being, our own Atman, manifested everywhere and 'in that state who will be deluded and by whom, who will feel miserable and for what.' The Gita too echoes this idea when it says:

> 'Attaining which state one does not think there is anything higher than that to gain and established in which one is not moved by the greatest of calamities or sorrows.'[10]

This state is not foreign to the devotees who worship God with form. They too experience that unlimited bliss in the proximity of their Chosen Ideal. A devotee of Kali like Ramaprasad was ever immersed in bliss, sang and danced in Her name and remained ever free. In the fullness of their heart they sang: 'A person who has for his mother, the Blissful One does he live in sorrow! Mother keeps him happy in this world and the next.' The Alwars and the Nayanars, the saints of Pandharpur, all worshipped God with form and attained to this state. Sri Krishna too says, 'these My devotees, who worship Me with earnestness even if they are the worst sinners become righteous-minded and attain eternal peace.' Therefore, we have to conclude that, whether man approaches the Divine, the repository of all happiness, as with form or formless he experiences the same peace, the same bliss, on reaching Him. Does not Sri Ramakrishna say in this context that a cake tastes sweet whether eaten straight or sideways?

Lastly, let it not be considered that this idea has remained only in the Scriptures inaccessible to the common folk and are the guarded treasures of the few fortunate of the intelligentsia. It is there in our folk songs if we care to know it, only we have to open our ears and tune our hearts. As an instance we quote here a folk song of Bengal,

एमन् किछु आछे किना जाते सदानन्दे थाका जाय।
दुःख जेन आमाय देखे दुःख पेये चले जाय॥

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[9] आत्मा वा अरे द्रष्टव्यः श्रोतव्यो मंतव्यो निधिध्यासितव्यः।

[10] यं लब्ध्वा चापरं लाभं मन्यते नाधिकं ततः।
यस्मिन् स्थितो न दुःखेन गुरूणापि विचाल्यते॥ *Gita*, VI-22.

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which translated means, 'Is there not such a thing by which I can live blissfully for ever, and seeing me in that state even misery will run away with fear (feeling sorry for its inability to overwhelm me)?' That is the true happiness, eternal and pure and that only is to be sought after.

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE GITA

SWAMI SIDDHINATHANANDA

Vyasa himself has assessed the value of the incomparable gem with which he has adorned his magnum opus the *Mahabharata*.

> 'Learn the Gita, why seek other books? This is the nectar derived direct from the lotus feet of the Lord. Gita is the quintessence of the scriptures just as Hari is the sum total of all divinities. There is no more any rebirth for him who remembers these four sacred things beginning with "G" viz., Gita, Ganga, Gayatri and Govinda.'

Only a labourer can know the real worth of his work. Vyasa says the Gita is invaluable.

Some doubt whether it is an integral part of the Mahabharata. There are not sufficient reasons to believe that it is not. The traditional belief is that it is a part of the great epic, that, with good reason. The ideas contained in the Gita are not unfamiliar to the author of the epic, nay, many verbatim Gita lines are scattered through the vast saga. It is the crest jewel of the Mahabharata. महत्त्वात् भारवत्त्वात् च महाभारतं उच्यते॥ It is great in content and heavy in volume, so it is called Maha Bharata, the great and heavy book. It is also known as Jaya, Victory. Victory of what? Of Dharma. 'With upraised hands I am crying hoarse, but none cares to hear me. From Dharma flow wealth and enjoyment. Why then is that not resorted to?' What is Dharma? It is an all comprehensive term. Let us consider a few ideas in which the epic uses it. Dharma stands for good conduct which conduces to liberation. The Gita proclaims the divine qualities such as fearlessness, purity of heart and pursuit of spiritual knowledge etc. 'Character is the test of religion.' The Mahabharata acclaims it. 'Where there is Dharma there is Krishna and where there is Krishna there is Dharma.' Thus Dharma and Krishna are inseparable; they are equated.

> 'I searched and stirred all scriptures, thought over them again and again. This is what I have got from them all, that Narayana should be meditated upon always. In the Veda, the sacred Ramayana, and the Mahabharata, in the beginning, in the middle and in the end, O King, Hari is extolled everywhere.'

This is what the fifth Veda proclaims, the Victory of Dharma which is God. Dharma is what the scripture enjoins. So yajna is Dharma. 'Prajapati created beings along with yajna and told them to multiply through it.'

The title 'Jaya' according to the Katapayadi computation is the number 18. The Bharata is full of eighteens, too numerous to be ignored as accidental. There seems to be some symbology intended through it. The Parvas in the epic are 18, the chapters in the Gita are 18. The Akshouhinies that joined battle are 18; the war went on for 18 days. Dhritarashtra, Gandhari and Kunti were burnt in the forest fire 18 years after the armageddon; the clan of Yadus killed themselves twice 18 years after the war. Evidently, it is intentionally symbolical. अष्टादशोक्तमवरं येषु कर्म। There are eighteen participants in a sacrifice, 16 priests, the sacrificer and his wife. Yudhisthira, the jiva, with his five organs of knowledge, five of action, the five vital forces, Manas and Buddhi is performing a sacrifice unto Krishna, the Paramatman. Yes, the soul's sacrifice of herself, heart and soul at the Lord's feet. That is the final

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clarion call of Krishna to Arjuna. 'Give up all and come unto me, I shall take ye by the hand.' It is also Vyasa's Jnanayajna, the offering of his wisdom and experience for the well-being of the Virat.

Dharma is the support of the world. It is the divine will or God's grace that ordains and sustains everything. It is this aspect of Dharma that the Mahabharata emphasises more than any other. When we take a conspectus of the whole epic history, it is this lesson that stands out in bold relief, that grace is everything and that self-effort is non-availing in the end. Whenever Sanjaya, the war reporter, brought the news of any terrible calamity to the Kaurava side, such as the fall of Bhishma or Drona or Karna, the blind king with tear-filled eye-sockets and heaving chest would exclaim,

> 'Every one of these heroes is strong enough to enslave the whole world single-handed. That they have been worsted in battle by the Pandava brothers is solely due to God's will. Verily grace is everything.' . . . 'No, fate cannot be set at nought.'

Not only that, even behind the so-called self-effort, if one looks deep enough, one can detect the hand of God working. यदि वाप्युपद्येत पौरुषं नाम कर्हिचित्, अन्विष्यमाणं तदपि दैवमेवातितिष्ठते ॥ This has been signified by the fact of Balabhadra's being in sympathy with the Kauravas. But in opposition to Krishna, he was weak. The pig-headed sons of the blind monarch had not the eye to see the guiding hand behind their soul. Sanjaya confirmed the King's opinion; he said, 'Fate is strong; human effort is useless. Just see how the heroes, everyone as strong as Indra, have been killed by the Pandavas.' विधिश्च बलवानत्र पौरुषं तु निरर्थकं, शक्रतुल्यबलाः सर्वे यथावद्धत्यन्त पाण्डवैः ॥ The Pandavas are the representation of Virtue; they had no existence apart from Krishna. Krishna was their all in all. When during the course of the war, Krishna congratulated Arjuna or Yudhishthira for any exploit, they would turn round and tell him 'Well Master, it is thy victory, thy grace; when thou art with us, where is defeat for us?'

Yudhishthira means one who is steadfast in battle. In armed fight Yudhishthira was not very strong. Then, in what battle was he strong? In the battle of right and wrong, good and bad, he was always on the side of right and good. Many a time has he said that he would not give up Dharma through fear, nor for pleasure, nor for greed; nay, even at the risk of his life he would uphold Dharma. To such steadiness in virtue, the physical prowess of a Bhima, the valour of an Arjuna, the physical beauty of a Nakula and the wisdom of a Sahadeva, is added complete surrender to God, that human being, such a Dharmaputra is invincible; the ship of such a life may run into rough sea, get caught in gale and billows, but it will never be overturned or wrecked, for the Captain is Krishna himself.

The victory of the Divine, the defeat of the ego-centric, the glory of the good, the destruction of the wicked, the rise of virtue, the eradication of vice are painted as the back-ground in order to instil discrimination and dispassion in man; this wisdom of the Gita is poured out so that man may drink deep of it, feel nourished in his soul, aspire for the highest, and reach the highest. Removal of misery without residue and the attainment of peace eternal is the message of the Bharata and the Gita.

All attempts at an amicable settlement of the feud failed. It became clear that only through the mediation of Mars could the issue be settled. Both the armies arranged themselves in the plain of Kurukshetra ready to join battle. Dhritarashtra did not like this impending carnage of the cousins. He had the insight to see that justice was on the side of the Pandavas. He had wisdom, but had not the competence to keep his sons under control. Perhaps his physical infirmity was to a great extent responsible for this helpless dotage. His blindness made him inordinately attached

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to his erring sons. At this juncture Vyasa, his father came and consoled him,

> 'Grieve not, O King; they are doomed by fate. Death is stalking around them; they are rushing to their destruction. It is all the work of Time. Know this and keep thy peace.'

Vyasa offered him the power of sight, if he was inclined to see the battle. The King declined it, he asked that Sanjaya be enabled to report everything to him. So Sanjaya got the power of television, telepathy, clairaudience and immunity from injury.

A last appeal was made to Duryodhana by many Rishis, Krishna, Vyasa and Vidura. All to no purpose. To the entreaty for blessings for victory by her son, the noble Gandhari said that only justice would win. The Kauravas had eleven armies and the Pandavas seven. In spite of all the contrary opinions of the elders, and even against his own inner-prompting, Dhritarashtra was wishing that somehow or other his sons would win the war. For the first few days he evinced no great interest in the progress of the battle. Then on the tenth night, Sanjaya arrived out of breath from the war field and announced 'This is I Sanjaya O, King, salutations unto thee. The grandsire "Bhishma" is struck down.'

अथ गावल्गणिर्विद्वान् संयुगादेत्य भारत।

* * *

आचष्ट निहतं भीष्मं भरतानां पितामहम् ॥
संजयोऽहं महाराज नमस्ते भरतर्षभ ॥
हतो भीष्मः शान्तनवो भरतानां पितामहः।

A veritable bolt from the blue. It struck the King down. There was weeping and wailing. A long while passed. He then asked Sanjaya to inform him in every detail all that took place right from the beginning of the war. This was on the tenth night. Then Sanjaya started telling all the events from the time the armies were assembled on the battle field. It was then that Sanjaya reported the Gita to Dhritarashtra, while enumerating the incidents of the first day's battle. So the textual context of the Gita is on the tenth night. Overlooking this textual position of the Gita, some people have put a wrong interpretation on the adjective 'Dharmakshetra'. They make Dhritarashtra imply by that qualifying word to Kurukshetra whether, due to the sanctity of the place, Dharmaputra was dissuaded from war and whether his sons won the day. *Hato Bhishmah Shāntanavah*; 'Bhishma is killed' was the first war news that the king got. To make him suspect whether any war was fought at all even after such a shock will be an insult to his commonsense.

Similarly, there is a common notion that Sanjaya was all the time sitting by the side of the old king and concurrently reporting the incidents with the help of his supernatural gift. This is not correct. He was a field reporter. Whenever any major incident such as Bhishma's fall, Drona's death, or Karna's destruction, took place he would rush to Hastinapura and then take up the thread from where he had stopped last and bring it upto-date. He was once even taken prisoner. Vyasa had to intercede in order to rescue him and thereby make effective the boon of immunity from hurt.

How did this war song that was used to rouse a drooping warrior to fight, become a religious scripture? It answers all the doubts, removes all impediments and lights the path of every spiritual aspirant. Vyasa who edited the Vedas, wrote the Sutras and the Gita, is the greatest teacher of Hinduism. These are the foundations of the Religion Eternal. They serve the three essential disciplines that an aspirant has to undergo, viz. the hearing of the scriptures, meditation on their meaning and reconciliation of contradictions, and actual practice. Vedas have to be heard; the Sutras reconcile and resolve. The Gita is a guide manual.

The teacher is God-incarnate, the disciple, his friend, a man. Only God can reveal His mysteries; and only a devoted man can grasp His glories. In this particular instance the disciple is a Kshatriya, one burning to wreak vengeance on his enemies. His mind is agi-

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tated. It is no use running away from a difficult situation. An escapist withdrawal from life's duties will not give man the desired peace of mind. A festering wound has to be opened up and the suppuration be drained away; only then will the wound heal. The mind that has once been allowed to be violently excited cannot be calmed until and unless it finds some expression. When the accumulated mental energy is expended through some letting off mechanism, then the control valve may stand the strain. That is why Krishna exhorted 'Therefore do thou fight.'

According to certain versions, the Gita contains 745 verses.

षट्शतानि सविंशानि श्लोकानां प्राह केशवः ।
अर्जुनः सप्तपञ्चाशत् सप्तषष्टिं तु संजयः ॥
धृतराष्ट्रः श्लोकमेकं गीताया मानमुच्यते ॥

Krishna spoke 620 verses, Arjuna 57, Sanjaya 67, Dhritarashtra 1, totalling 745 verses. According to the commentator, the number of verses is only 700. Some editions contain more than 700 verses. Then again, there is a practice of counting 32 letters as constituting a verse; so, the verses in long metres may make up the difference in the number of verses.

Dhritarashtra inaugurates the Gita with his query,

> 'What did my sons and Pandu's sons do, O Sanjaya, having assembled thirsting for fight on the holy field of Kurukshetra?'

Kuru, the founder of the clan once started to plough the field as a penance. First the Devas were inclined to ignore him. But he was resolute. He got a boon from Indra that any one who ends his life on that field in war or through starvation would go to Swarga. So it was called a field of penance *Kurukshetre tapah kshetre*, and it is this that made the field holy. Though both the sides were the descendants of Kuru, the sons of Dhritarashtra are popularly known as Kauravas. So, the field is theirs and naturally, they are stronger. Those who came to fight, must have fought. Why then this question, what did they do? The idea is that, not simply the progress of war, but the happenings before and around should all be narrated. Sanjaya is eminently fitted for the task as his name itself implies and also because of his being endowed with Vyasa's boon. San'jaya' also includes Jaya, the name of the epic. The closing verse of the Gita contains the word Vi-jaya, *tatra srirvijayo bhutih* which also encloses the title of the tome. The Pandavas, being the sons of his own brother, are virtually his sons, especially so, since Pandu was no more. By making a distinction between 'My sons and Pandu's sons', the king made it clear he considered them only as strangers, if not as positive enemies. The blind attachment to his sons made him spiritually irresponsive. Consequently justice and God were disregarded. Demoniacal tendencies held sway over him; they lead to bondage and destruction, says the Gita.

At the request of Arjuna, Krishna brought the chariot to the centre of the two armies. From a vantage ground Arjuna surveyed the two sides. His eyes met his own kith and kin on every side, grandsires, uncles, brothers, teachers, nephews and friends stood ready for war. A hitherto unforeseen solid fact faced Arjuna. He doubted the wisdom of war and the utility of a success. What is a victory worth if in the course of its achievement, all that one holds near and dear are to be sacrificed? The horror of war and the gravity of its consequence became vividly apparent to Arjuna's mind. His heart sank, hands shook, head reeled, face faded, the bow fell, and he sat down on the floor of the car, perspiring and bewildered. He spoke with choked voice to his charioteer. 'No, Krishna, I shall not fight. I do not care for the kingdom or royal splendour which are soaked in brothers' blood. Not even for heavenly happiness shall I do such a heinous crime. Even if they kill me I am not going to fight. Krishna, my dear, I am confused, my vision is blurred, I cannot see right and wrong clearly. I do not know what is good for me. I am helpless. I am thy disciple. I take shelter under thy feet.

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Please decide what is proper for me and direct me. Anyway, I will not fight.'

These words and predicament of Arjuna brought forth a smile on the lips of Sri Krishna. The Lord said :

> 'Thou grievest for those who are not to be grieved for ; and speakest thou words of the wise. But the wise do not grieve about the dead or the living.'

The teaching of the Gita commences here. In a sense, this is the kernel of the Gita ; the rest is only its explanation and expansion.

What is the cause for Krishna's smile ? The companion's words and deed. He spoke like a sage and behaved like a greenhorn. 'I know not what to do, please deign to advise me my course of action' he said and in the same breath added, 'But I will not fight.' He surrendered himself, but the self-will asserted. The surrender was with reservation and he was unaware of that fact. He quotes scriptures to avoid killing his kinsmen ; but he conveniently forgets that scripture sanctions the killing of an armed and aggressive enemy. Krishna seems to imply by his laughter that Arjuna was bereft of proper wisdom and the humility required of a disciple. Only through humility can wisdom be acquired. This incongruity on the part of his comrade, caused the smile on Krishna's lips.

Is it not then a sin to kill the venerable elders and teachers such as Bhishma, Drona and others ? There is no harm even in killing a person, be he a brahmin or even one's own teacher, if he advances with arms in hand with intent to kill. From this point of view there is no sin involved in this war. Then again, as for Bhishma and others, they have come to the field of battle to do their duty as warriors, to win the world or gain the heaven, so they are not objects of pity.

There are two components in death ; the departing spirit and the dropping cadaver. Which of these merits my pity ? The one is immortal, the other is decaying. Is it a sign of wisdom to grieve over the inevitable ? The wise do not fall a prey to grief either. The wise have their mind fixed on the eternal verity. They see the same reality running through all existence. They are same-sighted and consequently unperturbed. The wise man who is firmly established in the Real, the knower of God, the resolute, transcends misery. 'A knower of Brahman goes across grief'. 'Where is delusion and where is grief when unity is experienced ?' ask the Upanishads.

अस्थानस्नेहकारुण्यधर्माधर्मधियाकुलं, पार्थं प्रपन्न-
मुद्दिश्य शास्त्रावतरणं कृतम् ॥

Through misplaced pity, Arjuna's mind was clouded ; a righteous war, which is a warrior's duty, he felt to be wrong. Desiring to know what is really good, he took shelter under Krishna. Krishna advised him to do his duty without worrying about the consequence, to surrender the fruit of it all to God. He said that it is only through such disinterested performance of one's duties that one is enabled and entitled to grasp spiritual truths, which alone are capable of removing one's grief for ever and bestow peace everlasting. With this end in view, Krishna propounded the great Gita to Arjuna.

Emancipation can be had only by the perception of one's real being which is variously called as Kaivalya, Brāhmisthiti, Sthitaprajnā and so on. Ignorance is the root of man's bondage. Only knowledge can counteract ignorance. So at the very outset Krishna gives a disquisition about the Self. The rest of the teaching is only an elaboration and explanation of this central core and an exposition of the various means and paths wherewith to attain it. The ultimate Reality is designated as Sat-chit-ananda, existence, knowledge and bliss. Some are inclined towards the being aspect ; they reach their real being, by arresting the waves of the mind and stilling it through the practice of the eight-fold yoga —

ध्यानेनात्मनि पश्यन्ति केचिदात्मानमात्मना ॥

Those who seek knowledge get rid of their

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ignorance by analysing everything else into contentless nothingness and become one with the omnipresent knowing Being.

विनश्यत्सविनश्यन्तं यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥

The artistic mind enjoys the beauty and bliss of Brahman through some loving relation and attains the being that is Bliss. भक्त्या माम-भिजानाति यावान् यश्चास्मि तत्त्वतः ॥ Then there are the active minds. There are three ways of making karma a means for enlightenment ; one in its own right and the other two as ancilliary to Jnana and Bhakti. Whatever duty has befallen one according to one's state, status and culture is done for its own sake as an end in itself (*Karmanyevadhikaraste*). Thus he works out the accumulated merit and demerit, the former through the enjoyment of happiness that accrues incidentally during the performance of duty ; the latter, by accepting the pain that ensues in the course of action without demur. When both the assets and liabilities are balanced and cancelled, he is free. From this point, Karma is on the same par as the others. But some are inclined to accord a lower status only, for Karma. Well, some contend, Karma leads to purification of the mind and thereby it is a mediate means to jnana and moksha. सर्वं कर्माखिलं पार्थ ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते ॥ Their idea is that rituals and other practices have only a negative role in as much as they keep the mind engaged through discipline from straying wild ; but these do not give the mind a positive content and fulfilment. Then, karma may be a handmaid to Bhakti also. The aspirant surrenders all the results of his actions to his Beloved, finds joy in pleasing the Lord.

यत् करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।
यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत् कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥

Here by enlarging the conception of surrender from the results of action, to the action itself, one can transform karma to bhakti. स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः । Here one is in a fix whether to call it bhakti or karma, when the agent is only an instrument in the hands of his Lord निमित्तमात्रं भव सव्यसाचिन् ॥ Thus the active man through a discreet direction of his natural tendency recaptures his real being through blissful knowledge. In this way one may even say karma as a spiritual path has more breadth and application than any of the other parallel paths.

Either by realising the identity of the soul and the Oversoul, or through the jiva returning to its pristine position of the witness of the panorama of the phenomena, either surrendering one's all at the feet of the beloved, or by removing the accumulated accretions by wearing them out by disinterested work, one has to be established in the Self in order to be free from the shackles of misery and bondage. Only then can one have peace and bliss everlasting. This is the message of the Gita.

When the Gita was first preached, there was then going on a great controversy between two sects. One party considered the Vedic Yajnas and animal sacrifices and such like Karmas to constitute the whole of religion. The other preached that the killing of numberless horses and cattle cannot be called religion. . . . By the preaching of His great doctrine of work without motive, the Author of the Gita set at rest the disputes of these two antagonistic sects.

Many are of opinion that the Gita was not written at the time of the Mahabharata, but was subsequently added to it. This is not correct. The special teachings of the Gita are to be found in every part of the Mahabharata, and if the Gita is to be expunged, as forming no part of it, every other portion of it which embodies the same teachings should be similarly treated.

* * * * * *

Gita teaches Karma Yoga. We should work through Yoga (concentration). In such concentration in action, there is no consciousness of the lower ego present. . . . When one works with concentration, losing all consciousness of oneself, the work that is done will be infinitely better and this every one may have experienced in his own life. . . . The Gita teaches that all works should be done thus.

— SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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DAHARA VIDYA

M. K. VENKATARAMA IYER

The highest reality according to the classical Upanishads is the Nirguna Brahman. It is the Acosmic Absolute which cannot be characterised in any way. Since it goes beyond mind and thought it cannot be described in terms of any of the attributes known to us. It is beyond time and space, neither cause nor effect, neither substance nor attribute. It does not come under any of the categories of our understanding. It cannot be viewed as a whole consisting of parts, or an organism composed of constituent members, or an identity in the midst of differences or even as the One which has gone forth into the forms of the many. Nothing that we can possibly think of can be predicated of it. The formula, according to the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is 'not this', 'not this' (*neti, neti*). Vachaspati says that we cannot even affirm unity of the Highest but can only deny differences of it. It is altogether indefinable and unclassifiable. It is neither a genus nor a species nor has it any differentia. It cannot therefore be known in the way in which we know other things. It can never be an object in relation to a subject. This does not however mean that there can be no knowledge of it at all. Though it cannot be known in the ordinary way we can still sense it in the state of exalted intuition. Its reality is vouched for in mystical experience.

It follows that the doctrine of the Attributeless Absolute (*Nirvisesa Brahman*) will be intelligible only to the advanced adepts in *astanga yoga*. The final stage of this eight-fold discipline is called *samadhi* which itself admits of two grades, *savikalpaka* and *nirvikalpaka*. In the former, the aspirant has consciousness of the Absolute but when he ascends to the next and final stage it is transformed into Absolute Consciousness. Sankara refers to this point in one of his minor poems.[1] Such a crowning experience is not obviously within the reach of the ordinary run of people. To them the conception of reality beyond thought and mind will be wholly unintelligible. It may even appear as a mere blank. Pure Being, bereft of all attributes, will be hardly distinguishable from Pure Nothing. Even philosophers have taken this view. Hegel has said that what is not relative to thought is as nothing. Bradley has observed :

> 'That anything should be and yet should be nothing in particular or that a quality should not qualify and give character to anything is obviously impossible.'[2]

Sankara is not unaware of the possibility of such a misunderstanding. In his preface to the eighth chapter of the Chandogya Upanishad he writes,

> 'The absolutely true Brahman which is Pure Being and literally without a second may be regarded by persons of dull intellect as non-existent.'[3]

But these persons of dull intellect are the majority and they cannot be left uncared for. If they cannot rise to the highest point of view the only alternative is to bring the teaching down to their level without, of course, doing violence to it. The Upanishads, which believe in gradualness of instruction, recognise

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[1] Svarupanusandhanastaka, St. 5.

निषेधे कृते नेति नेति वाक्यैः
समाधिस्थितानां यदा भाति पूर्णम् ।
अवस्थात्रयातीतमद्वैतमेकं
परं ब्रह्म नित्यं तदेवाहमस्मि ॥

[2] Appearance and Reality. p. 162.

[3] Memorial Edition of Sankara's works, Vol. VII. p. 472.

दिग्देश गुणगति फलभेदशून्यं हि परमार्थसदद्वयं
ब्रह्म मन्दबुद्धीनां असदिव प्रतिभाति ।

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a lower standpoint and speak of Brahman as possessing attributes. It is called *Saguna* or *Savisesa* Brahman. It is nothing but the Highest in empiric dress. When the Nirvisesa Brahman is conceived intellectually it naturally comes within the relational scheme. It then becomes an object in relation to a knowing subject. As an object it is given a local habitation and a name. It comes to be endowed with other qualities also such as having 'true will' (*satyakamatva* and *satyasamkalpatva*).

In the first six sections of the eighth chapter of the Chandogya Upanishad we have what is called *Dahara Vidya*. It is stated there that Brahman resides inside the small akasa of the heart.

> 'In this city of Brahman there is a small palace in the shape of a white lotus; within it lies a still smaller inner akasa. That which lies in that should be sought after and understood.'

'The city of Brahman' is, of course, the human body. Within the body there is the heart which is itself comparatively small. Inside of the heart there is a still smaller akasa and this place is said to be the residence of Brahman. *Dahara* means small and since the first part of the eighth chapter of the Chandogya Upanishad describes Brahman residing in this small place as a fit object of meditation, it is known as Dahara Vidya. It is typical of many other sections of the Upanishads which deal with meditation on the Cosmic Absolute (*Saguna Upasana*). Various facts connected with the upasana which are scattered in several Upanishads are all gathered up in this section. As a meditative exercise it is a whole in itself. All the details are found here and we have only to slightly rearrange them to make them presentable to modern readers.

Such aids to meditation we have in plenty in the Upanishads. Brahman may be worshipped as residing in the sun, moon, lightning, ether, the five elements and so forth. In the course of his supposed instruction to Ajatasatru, Balāki mentions these and several others.[4] Six brahmins go to King Asvapati,[5] seeking instruction about the Atman Vaiswanara. When they are asked to state what they worship as the Atman they mention the sun and the five elements. These objects of meditation are all in the external world. Within us also there are centres which are fit for meditation on Brahman. The small space within the lotus-shaped heart is mentioned in many Upanishads as a locus for the worship of Brahman. In Katha IV. 6 we read *guhām pravishya tishṭantam*, in Prasna III. 6, *hridi hyesha atma*, in Mundaka II. 10 *nihitam guhāyam*, in Mundaka VI. 7 *divye brahmapure hyesha vyomnyatma pratiṣṭhitaḥ* and in Taittiriya I. iv. 1 *sa ya antarhridaya akasaḥ*. In interpreting these statements Sankara has said that the assignment of the space within the heart as the resting place of Brahman is intended both to aid the understanding and provide a support for meditation. What he writes in his commentary on the Taittiriya passage is typical of all the rest.

तस्यैतस्य ब्रह्मण: साक्षादुपलब्ध्यर्थं उपासनार्थं च हृदयाकाश स्थानमुच्यते, सालग्राम इव विष्णो: ॥

The same idea is repeated in Chandogya VIII. i. 1. Explaining

'अस्मिन्ब्रह्मपुरे दहरं पुण्डरीकं वेश्म'

he writes तस्मिन्ब्रह्मपुरे शरीरे दहरं वेश्म, ब्रह्मण उपलब्ध्यधिष्ठानमित्यर्थ: यथा तथा विष्णो: सालग्राम: ॥

For ordinary people it is difficult to understand anything except as existing in a certain place and at a particular point of time. The functioning of the human intellect is bound by these two determining factors, space and time. दिग्देशादिभेदवद्वस्त्विति एवं भाविताबुद्धि: । as Sankara puts it. For purposes of devout meditation we require also a concrete symbol. Just as we imagine that Lord Vishnu resides in the salagrama even so we believe that the small space within the lotus-shaped heart is the place where Brahman resides. The

[4] Br. Up. II. i.

[5] Ch. Up. V. xi. to xviii.

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heart is called *hridaya* because the self exists in it : हृदि अयमात्मा वर्तत इति यस्मात् तस्माद्धृदयम्॥ Adepts in Kundalini Yoga identify the akasa within the small space of heart with what is known as *anahata chakra* and the meeting of Indra and Indrani mentioned in Br. Up. IV. ii. 3 with the meeting of Siva and Devi.

Since the location of the Highest in the small space of the heart is purely fanciful, there is no organic connection between the two. The *akasa* within the heart is a small place but it does not mean that Brahman residing in it is also small. The internal organ within the white-lotus of the heart is small and consequently Brahman which is reflected in it also appears small. It is like an object reflected in a small mirror. In itself Brahman is infinite and unlimited. 'As large as this akasa outside, so large is the akasa in the heart.'[6] Even this statement is not to be taken literally. It only means that the akasa outside is the nearest parallel that we can think of to elucidate the infinite and unlimited character of Brahman. But it does not imply that Brahman is only as large as the akasa outside. The terms 'small' and 'large' have no meaning so far as Brahman is concerned. Shape, size and extension are all spatial concepts and obviously they have no relevance so far as Brahman is concerned. This is what is intended by the statement *anoraniyān mahato mahiyān*, appearing in another Upanishad.[7]

Nor do the vicissitudes of the body such as old age, disease and death pertain to Brahman. The body may grow old, get stricken with disease and ultimately perish, but Brahman lying in the heart remains untouched by these changes. 'By the decrepitude of the body that does not age, by the death of this, that is not killed.' Its connection with the body is wholly adventitious. When right knowledge dawns on the individual he realises that 'the self is free from evil, free from decrepitude, free from death, free from sorrow, free from hunger and thirst.' Such a man dissociates his self from the body and he is then said to have attained the state of bodilessness. Untrammelled by the shackles of the body he then rises to his true stature.

> 'This serene and happy being, after having risen out of the body and having reached the highest light, becomes merged in his own true form — the Self.'

We have said already that Saguna Brahman is not only given a local habitation and a name but is also endowed with several qualities such as having true desire and true will (*satyakamatva* and *satyasamkalpatva*). A desire is followed by an act of will to accomplish it. Isvara's desires are true in the sense that they proceed from His Pure Satvic nature and are not coloured by the slightest admixture of Rajas and Tamas. Hence Isvara's desires are entirely free from gross, sensual implications. They are pure and passionless, wholly unselfish and concerned with what is good in itself. His will power is strong and unfailing. For Him therefore, to desire anything is to have it accomplished at once. It is said that the creation of the world is a mere matter of His will (*icchamatram prabhosrishṭiḥ*).[8] The order and harmony, the rule of law and the supremacy of justice that we find in the worlds that He has created are an expression of His will. The Upanishad speaks of Him as the dam or embankment for the safety of the worlds. It is in obedience to His laws that the heavenly bodies keep to their orbits and do not come into head long collision. The moral law which governs the creations of human beings is also an expression of His will. He is the ultimate guarantor of justice and other spiritual values. He is therefore the highest truth and the highest value, relatively speaking. Day and night do not cross Him in the sense that He is beyond time and, by implication, beyond space. He is beyond the reach of evil, suffering and sorrow. One who attains unity with Him by devout meditation leaves all his defi-

[6] Dr Ganganath Jha's Translation of the Chandogya Upanishad and Sankara's commentary thereon is adopted throughout this paper.

[7] Katha II. 20.

[8] Gaudapada's Mandukya Karika, I. 8.

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ciencies and imperfections behind him. The blind is no longer blind, the afflicted no longer afflicted. Even night becomes day in the region of Brahman in the sense that it is always effulgent. Darkness and ignorance are left far behind. The foregoing account of the qualities with which Saguna Brahman is endowed is calculated to show that He is an eminently fit object for meditation and worship. Such a being has therefore to be sought after and understood (सोऽन्वेष्टव्यः स विजिज्ञासितव्यः). One should go to a competent teacher and seek instruction from him regarding the nature of the Brahman seated in the heart of man.

In addition to betaking oneself to the right type of teacher for instruction, another essential preliminary discipline of co-ordinate importance is the observance of the strictest celibacy. Great stress is laid on this fact in other Upanishads also. In the Prasna Upanishad we read that six students waited on sage Pippalada, practising strict celibacy for one year before they became qualified to approach him and put questions to have their doubts cleared. There is also the explicit statement in the same Upanishad (I. 15), that 'only those attain Brahma loka who are well established in the practice of austerity, celibacy and truth.'

तेषामेवैष ब्रह्मलोको येषां तपो ब्रह्मचर्यं येषु सत्यं प्रतिष्ठितम् ।

In the second part of the eighth chapter of the Chandogya Upanishad we see that Indra, the greatest of the gods, observed strict celibacy for one hundred and one years before the highest truth was revealed to him by Prajapati. In the sections dealing with Dahara Vidya it is said further that *brahmacharya* is the highest virtue and all other disciplines such as sacrifice (*yajna*), worship (*Ista*), sacrificial sessions (*sattrayana*), silent meditation (*mauna*) and so forth are subordinate to it. They are all comprehended in celibacy. Only the man who is steadily practising brahmacharya can obtain the rewards of these other disciplines. In the absence of the former they will prove futile. We have therefore to treat *brahmacharya* as a foundational virtue. It is the primus and precondition of all spiritual effort. The stress that is laid on it is therefore not at all exaggerated. No man can function at two centres at the same time with equal efficiency. The lower centre must be suppressed in favour of the higher. Man's physical energy must be conserved and sublimated if he is really serious about his spiritual advancement. The mere reading of scriptures and the holding of discussions about God and soul will prove barren of results if they are not backed up and enlivened by a life of austerity and severe discipline. Just as mechanical aids such as the microscope and telescope aid the perception of the facts of the physical world, even so spiritual discipline is indispensable for realising the higher values of life. Without such discipline and serious striving all our intellectual inquiries will amount to mere idle curiosity. One must firmly turn his back on the world and what it can give by way of sensual pleasures if he is to devote himself whole-heartedly to the values of spirit.

Devout and continued meditation on Brahman in one's own heart as endowed with true desires and true will (*satyakama* and *satyasamkalpa*) will transform the worshipper by gradual and imperceptible stages into the likeness of the object of his meditation. The principle underlying the phenomenon is called '*bhramara kita nyaya*'. Thought works a silent change in our nature. In one of his minor poems,[9] Sankara writes :

यदभ्यासेन तद्भावो भवेत्भ्रमरकीटवत् ।
अतापहाय संदेहं अभ्यसेत्कृतनिश्चयः ॥

'One should give up all doubts and practise meditation steadily because it will transform the worshipper into the likeness of the object of his worship just as the worm which is in constant fear of the stinging of the bee becomes itself a bee.'

Becoming like unto Isvara, the aspirant will have all his desires fulfilled without fail. That is because his desires will be completely spiri-

9 Brahmanucintanam, St. 9.

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tualised in the course of his meditations. He will not seek the fulfilment of his desires in terms of sensual pleasures. Ordinarily our desires owe their origin to our ignorance (avidya). Hence they cease to be true desires. We seek the gratification of these ignorance-born desires in the world of material pleasures. No wonder that we get disappointed. What is untrue is bound to be foiled. If, however, we pierce this veil of ignorance we will discover underneath these false coverings and thick incrustrations the true desires and the true will. They are hidden from our view even as the treasure trove is concealed by the layers of earth. This is what is meant by the statement that the Brahman-knower has absolute freedom of movement in all the worlds. He can range at will wherever he likes. If he longs for the company of his father, mother, brother or sister he can have it for the mere desiring. If he wants scents and garlands, food and drink, music and dance he can have them for the mere asking. This does not mean that he will meet his relations in flesh and blood. That is impossible since they are dead and reduced to ashes. Nor will he be in his gross physical body when he is supposed to meet them. The meeting is ideal, comparable to our dream experiences. What we perceive in the state of dream is true so long as the dream lasts. In fact nothing could be truer in that state. That dream experiences are sublated in the waking state is a different matter. That does not affect the genuineness of the dream experience as long as it lasts. In the same manner the Brahman-knower will be able to call up whoever or whatever he wants by his mere desire even as Isvara calls the world into being by the exercise of his *ikshana*. It is a case of *dṛṣti sṛṣti*.

The man who is ignorant of Brahman who is residing in his own heart and on whom he lights everyday in his moments of sound sleep is like the man who is unaware of the treasure hidden underground though he treads on that place again and again. It is most unfortunate that people should touch Brahman everyday but do so only unconsciously. To make it a conscious contact, spiritual effort is necessary. It is a terrible pity that, for want of this effort, they remain ignorant of their real nature and become the slaves of false desires. People who throw away the opportunity that comes to them almost unasked and depart from this world without the knowledge of Brahman have no freedom of movement. They have to be going round and round the cycle of transmigration (*samsara*). They may indeed go to heaven by virtue of their merit but their stay there is bound to be short-lived. As soon as their merit is exhausted they will have to come down to mundane existence. There is no question of their getting beyond this sphere except by true knowledge which will liberate them from their false desires. It is in the pursuit of these false and unfulfilled desires that they are born again and again.

The section on Dahara Vidya concludes with a description of the passage of the Brahman-knower to Brahmaloka. Since he has only engaged in devout meditation and worship on the Brahman seated in the lotus-shaped heart, he is not qualified for absolute liberation. For such a consummation one has to realise his identity with the Brahman who is Pure Spirit, transcending space, time and causation. Such a man need not go anywhere, not even to Brahmaloka. He becomes Brahman here and now. Remaining where he is he realises his true nature and that is the highest consummation. But the case is different with people who worship and meditate on Brahman as residing in a particular place and in a form attractive to the worshipper. That the worshipper cannot dispense with name and form is a sure indication that there is still a trace of ignorance left in him.

When such a worshipper dies he does not attain *Videha mukti* straightway but proceeds to Brahmaloka, the world of Brahman. There are seventytwo thousand arteries branching out of the heart and pervading all parts of the

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body. In several Upanishads[10] there is reference to these arteries (*nadis*) proceeding from the heart. One of these, known as the *sushumna nadi* takes the soul of the dying man to the pericardiam (brahma randra). From thence it passes through the regions of wind, sun and moon till it finally reaches the region of Brahman. This region is described as being without cold (*ahimam*) and without grief (*asokam*).[11] It means that in that region there is neither physical ailment nor mental sorrow. It is the abode of happiness. There he resides enjoying the company of Brahman and other similarly liberated souls. At the time of the dissolution of the entire world (*Kalpanta pralaya*) he attains *videha mukti* along with Brahman. This is called *krama mukti*, liberation by stages. Such a man no longer returns to mortal existence. The Upanishad says *tesham na punaravrittih*. In Chandogya IV. xv. 6 it is said that those who know and meditate on Brahman as the Person in the Eye go by the northern path to Satyaloka from whence they do not return to this earth. This is not absolute merging in Brahman but something short of that. In Chandogya V. 10 we read that those who know the philosophy of the Five Fires (*Panchagni Vidya*) go by the path of the gods (*Devayana*) to Brahmaloka. The immortality spoken of here is also relative. It is continued existence in Brahmaloka till final dissolution takes place. Dahara Vidya also concludes on the same note. Taken as a whole it is a remarkably clear and concise statement of the doctrine of the worship of the conditioned Brahman (*Sagunopasana*).

[10] Br. Up. II. 19 : IV. 2, IV. iii. 20 : IV. iv. 9 and Katha VI. 16.
[11] Br. Up. V. 10.

PATH OF PERFECTION

S. KALYANAM

Knowledge has in all its facets and branches had different approaches with resulting varied interpretations and conclusions. Similarly the concept of perfection, the concept of man and his life in general have had their different orientations too, which may broadly be classified as the Eastern and the Western. The Eastern approach especially that of the Indian and his analysis of these problems arise from two principal premises ; the first one being that according to the Indian thinker, the life of any animate being is only a stage in a series of births and deaths in that cycle, man experiences often misery and sorrow and even the so-called happiness gives him only a transitory pleasure. Man's aim therefore should be an escape from this cycle of births and deaths, *bhavachakra* as has rightly been called by Lord Buddha and attain a happiness everlasting in nature or *nityānanda*.

In contrast to this view, the approach of the West has been one of a quest for a solution of these problems of universe, man and his relation to nature and which was called 'Philosophy'. The concept of 'Perfection' is, to the West, attaining a high moral discipline and ethical standard, and philosophy as an inquiry into the abovesaid problems, has resulted to be more of an armchair and theoretical speculation. Philosophy and religion with its emphasis on ethics travel as though on different rails, without an intimate association or relationship. In India on the otherhand, Philosophy arose from a practical necessity, the attainment of *moksa*, or perfection and eternal joy, as we have observed earlier. Thus we see that the Indian approach to the similar problems has contributed not only philosophy but religion too with a happy and mutual combination and substantiation. In India Philosophy

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has not only been a way of thinking, but a way of life too.

Having interpreted in a broad sense the concept of Perfection, we would pass on to a concise analysis of the paths thereon viz. *Karma, Bhakti* and *Jnāna.* The first, '*karma*' refers to the duties and responsibilities imposed on an individual by the nature of his birth under certain conditions, the guiding principles in such performance being the *varṇa* and *āśrama* restrictions. The duty of every individual should be performance of obligations guided by the mere fact of his birth and with little or no thought as to their rationale or fruits accruing thereon. The Gospel of Bhagawad Gita stands as a beacon for Karma yoga, the teachings of Lord Kṛṣna to Arjuna for the latter's performance of the duties of a typical warrior without bringing in considerations of relationship, family bonds or the results of such endeavours. Here Lord Kṛṣna cites himself as an exemplar of *Karmayoga* in the following verse :

न मे पार्थास्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किञ्चन ।
नानवाप्तं अवाप्तव्यं वर्त एव च कर्मणि ॥

The goal of such performance has been vouchsafed to be the purification of the *antaḥ karaṇa* or the mind known as the *sattva śuddhi* for entering into the threshold of Bhakti. Here a question may arise in our minds whether *karma* or the performance of duties is an essential step to Bhakti, whether a non-karma yogi can never be a true and sincere *bhakta.* Our Indian sages have held the view that *karma* and external purity are essential steps to internal purity which in turn offer the pedastal for the occupant, viz. God.

Bhakti has been translated as a Loving Devotion to the Lord and it is said to have nine stages and ninefold in kind (navadha bhakti) which is expressed in the form of the following verse :

श्रवणं कीर्तनं विष्णोः स्मरणं पादसेवनम् ।
अर्चनं वन्दनं दास्यं सख्यमात्मनिवेदनम् ॥

The aspirant starts with hearing the deeds of the Lord whether it be that of Sri Rama, Sri Kṛṣna, or Jesus Christ and progresses onward through the stages of constant meditation and utterance of the Lord's name to the ultimate stage of *ātmanivedana,* an absolute surrender, styled as *prapatti* or *Śaranāgati* by the Vaiṣṇavites. Sugrīva, in his prayer to Rāma, explaining the attitude of a bhakta towards his God addresses as follows :

त्वत्पादपद्मार्पितचित्तवृत्तिः
त्वन्नामसङ्कीतकथासु वाणी ।
त्वद्भक्तसेवानिरतौ करौ मे
त्वदङ्गसङ्गं लभतां मदङ्गम् ॥

त्वन्मूर्तिभक्तान् खगुरुं च चक्षुः
पश्यत्वजस्रं स शृणोतु कर्णः ।
त्वज्जन्मकर्माणि च पादयुग्मं
व्रजत्वजस्रं तव मन्दिराणि ॥

अङ्गानि ते पादरजो विमिश्र
तीर्थानि बिभ्रत्वहिशत्रुकेतो ।
शिरस्त्वदीयं भवपद्मजाद्यै-
र्जुष्टं पदं राम नमत्वजस्रम् ॥

Adhyatma Ramayana.

The constant meditation and a feeling of self merger in the Deity is what is expected of a true bhakta. This is a state when the devotee forgets his duality from the Lord and such a state of joy has been experienced by the great saints like Tulsi Das, Thyāgarāja and Ramana Maharsi.

Despite this achievement the Indian thinker was not satisfied in full and pointed out that such happiness or joy has to end so long as the presence of duality or an empirical relation of subject and object continues. This discontent gave rise to a further search into the principles underlying the subject and the object, the individual, the world and God. This research on the world, within and without, internal and external which we may call in terms of classical psychology, as introspection and extrospection has been explained in full in the Upanishads. At one stage of his investigation the aspirant *experiences* by his ascetic and yogic practices that the principles of subject and object, viz. those underlying his own existence

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as well as that of God, and the world are not different but one and the same. This unity is expressed in the *mahāvākyas* of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka and Chāndogya Upaniṣads as 'Aham Brhmāsmi and Tat twam Asi'. This realisation of the Supreme Being with its character of permeation and omnipresence including that of the individual or jiva from which it is non-different, is declared in the Upaniṣads as the basic knowledge and learning in which too all research and study culminate. In the Chāndogya Śvetaketu's father expresses the same idea when he says 'Tat twam Asi Śvetaketo!' which Śvetaketu failed to learn till then. This experience of the Nonduality of the Basic Substratum is called Mokṣa or realisation which is said to endow the seeker with an outlook, universal and magnanimous in character.

अयं निजपरोवेति गणना लघुचेतसां
उदारचरितानां तु वसुधैव कुटुंबकम् ॥

The strict learning of the said knowledge under a guru followed by an unfailing yogic practice, culminating in this realisation or the aparokṣānubhūti, is the zenith of all philosophic endeavour in India.

We have so far sketched the significance of the concept of 'perfection' and the paths chalked out for it by our Indian sages. The above paragraphs delineating the different channels for the goal, may leave behind a misconception in our minds viz. that these paths are mutually exclusive and independent and thereby a karmayogi need not be a bhakta or a jnāni, that a bhakta need not perform his obligatory duties and much less a jnāni. The correct interpretation would be that the steps of karma and bhakti are not only thresholds for entry into the next but also permeate and pervade them all. In other words a bhakta and a jnāni too should be karmayogins, should perform duties and obligations incumbent on them though the method and angle of such performance would differ from those of a layman. The bhaktas and jnānis are men IN regular action and performance but not OF action in the sense they are unaffected by either that performance or by its results.

THE BODHISATTVA IDEAL

MATILAL DAS

Gautama Buddha, the great Healer of humanity, after his illumination revealed to the world a practical way to deliverance and peace. This way was from the very beginning a way of love and sympathy, of service and selflessness, of kindliness and compassion to all living creatures. But in early Buddhism, the emphasis was on the ideal of the Arhat. Gautama converted his first disciples by preaching to them the four noble truths and the noble eightfold way. He explained to them the impermanence and transitoriness of everything in the world and non-substantiality of all the constituents of human personality. Following the footsteps of Lord Buddha, an Arhat passes from the flesh to the spirit. He lives the holy life and attains undefiled and final emancipation of mind and heart. The *summum bonum* of his life was Nirvana. It is no doubt true that Buddha advised his followers to go forth and preach his doctrine for the welfare and liberation of the multitude. But generally the aim of an Arhat was personal salvation and the duty of helping others was a secondary one.

Against this spiritual selfishness, against this inactive and indolent monastic life, the Bodhisattva ideal was promulgated by some great Buddhist leaders. This ideal was known as *Bodhisattva-yana* which was later replaced by the name *Mahayana.*

Tennyson has written :

'The old order changeth yielding place to new
And God fulfills himself in many ways
Lest one good custom should corrupt this world.'

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By following this inner law, there was growth and development in Buddhism and we got Mahayana, the great-way, the great vehicle. It was a protest against the cloistered, placid and cold monastic life and it emphasised genuine spiritual fervour blended with heart-felt altruism. According to this doctrine a Bodhisattva is he who purifies himself and attains *anuttarā sammā sambodhi* — perfect supreme enlightenment, one who enters the Light but yet denies himself the joy of Nirvana, so that he may help and succour his fellow-creatures in the world of sorrow, sin and impermanence. The Arhats did not seek for intellectual perfection and supreme wisdom, they were content if they could have freedom from sorrows, the cessation of the *asravas.*

The early use of the word Bodhisattva is to be found in the Pali Nikayas. There Gautama says that he was a Bodhisattva before the attainment of his enlightenment. But the Mahayanists gave to the word a higher significance. Santi Deva, a great thinker and teacher of the seventh century says that a Bodhisattva means one whose essence is enlightenment. He is a man who is egoless and compassionate. He is a treasure of virtues and his charity knows no limits.

A Bodhisattva was regarded as superior to an Arhata or a Shravaka. His aim was to acquire Bodhi and Buddha-knowledge, in other words he strives to become a Buddha by attaining perfect enlightenment. The two conceptions of Bodhi and Buddhahood are integral parts of the Bodhisattva ideal.

Bodhi primarily means omniscience. It is the supreme knowledge which is without a superior, incomparable and unsurpassed. We cannot comprehend it with our intellect, it is beyond our mental capacity. It is identical with Reality and Suchness and includes all that exists.

Buddha's personality was radically transformed by the Mahayanists who bestowed on him all the mystical attributes of the impersonal Brahma. Buddha claimed no superhuman powers but the Mahayanists made him *lokottara* in all actions. He was noted for his deep and great pity, he was the embodiment of love, mercy and compassion for all beings. In addition to this *karuna,* he was remarkable for his thorough and unblemished purity. A Bodhisattva is to aspire after the great ideal. Round about the personal life of Gautama, they built this great conception of Buddhahood. Every living creature can become such a Buddha and he must become such a Buddha. A Bodhisattva sacrifices himself so that this great goal and ideal is accomplished. He works for the welfare of the world and must wait outside on the threshold until all beings enter into Nirvana.

The first step in the life of a Bodhisattva is *bodhichittotpada* — the rise of the thought of Bodhi. He must think of becoming a Buddha for the good of the world, for the liberation of humanity and must make certain great vows. He must resolve that he will attain the immortal, undecaying, pain-free Bodhi and, free the world from all pain. After this vow which is called *pranidhana,* a living Buddha must predict his future success after the lapse of a very long period of time.

A Bodhisattva's career and discipline is four-fold. It consists of the practice of principles conducive to enlightenment, practice of the super-knowledge, practice of the perfections, practice of preaching and teaching.

Of these four-fold disciplines, the first refers to the practice of thirty seven *Dharmas*, called *bodhipakshya Dharmah* which comprise the four fields of mindfulness, the four right efforts, the four *Riddhis,* the five controlling principles, the five powers, the seven factors of Bodhi and the eight-fold path.

A Bodhisattva must have mindfulness in respect of the body, feelings, thoughts and the phenomena. Mindfulness with regard to the body is an entrance to the light of faith which enables the aspirant to isolate himself from the body, the source of evil, filth and sin. By the next, he learns to restrain and control all

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feelings. The third mindfulness understands that *chitta* is by nature luminous. By the fourth, he learns that the phenomena arise from causes, are relative and interdependent and are also impermanent and fragile. The first effort is to prevent the inception of evil conditions not yet arisen, the second is the abandonment of sinful conditions already arisen. The third is production of meritorious mental conditions not yet arisen and the fourth is the promotion of them when arisen. He cultivates wonder-working powers by uniting a strong desire to the moulding forces of concentration and effort, secondly uniting thought, thirdly by uniting energy and fourthly by uniting investigation. The five *indriyas* and the five *balas* are faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom, having the same name for each set. A Bodhisattva must cultivate the seven factors of enlightenment, known as mindfulness, investigation of the doctrine, energy, love, tranquillity, concentration and equanimity. He must also follow the positive and practical precepts of the eight-fold path; right view, right aspiration, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right endeavour, right mindfulness and right concentration.

A Bodhisattva must also resolve to practise the six virtues of perfection. The six *paramitas* are — charity, morality, patience, energy, contemplation and wisdom. Four *paramitas* were annexed later on — *upaya*, *pranidhana*, *bala*, *jnana*. All these sublime and disinterested perfections are to be cultivated through attentive thought, resolute purpose, self-mastery and wisdom in the choice of means.

This glorious career of a Bodhisattva comprises of several parts and stages. He awakens and advances from one stage to another till he attains Bodhi. These stages are called *bhumis* and *vihars* and the various books give various accounts of them.

The first stage according to the much-accepted *Dasha-Bhumika* is *Pramudita*, or joyful. The Bodhisattva gives up the foolish common life and rejoices exceedingly at the teachings of the Buddha and the disciples of the Bodhisattvas. He practices *dana-paramita* with zeal. The second stage is called *Vimala*. The aspirant is now steady and free from desire. The third stage is called *Prabhakari*. He is now pure and magnanimous and cultivates the perfection of forbearance and endurance specially. In the fourth Bhumi called *Archishmati* he realises that all things arise and disappear and practises the perfection of energy without neglecting the other *Paramitas*. The fifth stage is named *Sudurjaya*. He comprehends the four Noble Truths and is devoted to *Dhyana Paramita*. In the sixth, known as *Abhimukhi*, he understands the equality and sameness of all things and phenomena. He comprehends the formula of *Pratitya-samutpada* and cultivates the perfection of wisdom. The seventh Bhumi is *Durangama* and he participates in the attributes of the Buddhas and cultivates the paramita *upayakaushalya*. In the eighth stage called *Achala*, he is not contaminated by any action. He practises the perfection of Aspiration and pervades the whole world with the feeling of friendliness. The ninth Bhumi is known as *Sadhumati*. He knows now all principles and phenomena truly and experiences many samadhis. He is now devoted to the perfection of strength. The tenth stage goes by the name of *Dharmamegha*. He acquires a glorious body and performs the last paramita, the perfection of knowledge.

It has been claimed that the conception of the living and merciful Bodhisattva is the highest the mind can have and those who live in its light cannot help having a radiating influence upon all beings and thereby attaining supreme happiness. If one ponders over the latent ideas behind the arduous career of the Bodhisattva, one cannot but accept this view.

The Bodhisattva ideal is therefore the most glorious contribution of the Mahayana to human civilization and culture. Desire is the root of world-sorrow. One who frees himself from the heavy chains of *Tanha* becomes a son of the Light. But among these sons of the Light, the Bodhisattvas are the loving servants

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of all living beings and each moment, they breathe out the blessing — 'may all living beings be happy'.

The Bodhisattva ideal is not anything foreign to the teaching of Lord Buddha. It is in the true spirit of the compassionate one. Individual enlightenment is good but those who strive for universal enlightenment are really superior men. Mahayana, thus combining transcendental idealism with all-embracing love should receive greater attention from the seekers for Truth.

CAN REVELATION AND INTUITION BE REGARDED AS INDEPENDENT AND RELIABLE SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE?

(*Continued from the previous issue*)

K. R. VENKATASUBRAMANIAN

Authoritarianism as a Source of Knowledge: First, we have to examine authoritarianism as a source of knowledge. Generally, there is a tendency among the ignorant and the religious to base their beliefs on authority. This belief is called belief in the testimony of others. An ignorant person's belief in an authority is wrought with difficulties for himself since many a time we come across instances where the ignorant people are duped by pseudo-saints and philosophers who preach for the sake of profession. And, such authorities instead of helping us toward the attainment of knowledge will sap our material resources. Such authorities cannot be relied upon, and a belief in their testimony is not worth-while.

As per the religious people's belief in authority and sacred books, it is undoubtedly good for self-development provided the Guru (to use the expression given in the Hindu Shastras) himself is an Enlightened person with no material motive. The characteristics of such a guru or authority are very well-described by Shankaracharya in his Vivekachudamani. Therein he says:

shrotriaḥ avrajinaḥ akamahataḥ yo brahmavittamaḥ
brahmani uparataḥ shanto nirindhana ivanalaḥ
ahetuka dayāsindhuḥ bandhuḥ ānamatam satām

— *Vivekachudamani*, 33.

'(A Guru is) one who is versed in the Vedas, sinless, unsmitten by desire and a knower of Brahman par excellence, who has withdrawn himself into Brahman; who is calm, like fire that has consumed its fuel, who is a boundless reservoir of mercy that knows no reason, and a friend of all good people who prostrate themselves before him.' *

Without commenting much on this stanza, I wish to maintain that only such authorities are reliable and hence if we want to rely upon authoritarianism as a source of knowledge, we should accept only such authorities as our guides.

William Montague, contrasting authoritarianism with rationalism, says,

> 'In short, a rationalistic method of teaching ethics secures the pupil's essential morality against the consequences of the teacher's possible errors, and it also quickens and develops the child's moral sensibility by making him feel responsible, not only for doing right, but for finding out what is right to do. While, on the other hand, the authoritarian method of teaching ethics not only endangers the essentials of morality by making them

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dependent on an external authority, the validity of which may be later brought in question, but it also debauches and deadens the child's moral sense, and especially his sense for moral perspective, by refusing to submit its teachings to inquiry and verification and by lumping together in a code of arbitrary rules, principles that are important and permanent with precepts that are trivial and temporary.'

Much can be said both in favour of and against this view; but, I do not wish to enter into a lengthy criticism here. I hold that much of Montague's fears about authoritarianism as a way of attaining knowledge, which is summed up in his own words above, can be overcome if we test an authority by the qualifications prescribed by Sankaracarya in his stanza quoted already. Secondly, Montague is certainly over-confident about the child's susceptibilities when he says that a rationalistic method of teaching ethics secures the pupil's essential morality against the consequences of the teacher's possible errors, *and it also quickens and develops the child's moral sensibility by making him feel responsible*, not only for doing right, but for finding out what is right to do. In this Montague is expecting too much from a child, who, I feel, is not matured enough to grasp what rationalism preaches. A child's mind can be developed only through feelingful approaches and this is the reason why Montessori system of education is much appreciated now-a-days. Rationalistic approach is meant for the matured minds and not for the ignorant or the ill-developed.

Rationalistic method of attaining knowledge: Montague defines rationalism as the method of proving propositions by appealing to abstract and universal principles. By universals, he means such objects of thought as are signified by class-names (as 'horse', 'man', etc.) and by abstract names (as 'humanity', 'roundness', etc.); and by objects he wishes to signify

'anything that can be perceived or conceived — not only concrete objects like horses, men, etc., but also relations and activities such as might pertain to them.'

Rationalism as a method of knowledge, and as taught in the colleges today, ultimately reduces itself to a logic of induction or syllogistic reasoning. Of course there are very few philosophers like Bradley and Bosanquet who transgress the traditional line of thinking because their treatises on logic are connected more with Truth and Reality than with the hair-splitting arguments over trivialities. I do not, therefore, wish to deny the importance of such thinkers when I criticise rationalism as a method of logic, pure and simple and as taught in schools and colleges. I am inclined to think that knowledge in the true sense cannot be attained either by the method of deduction or induction. Logic and epistemology must go together towards the attainment of knowledge. In this respect, I do not agree with Montague in his analysis of knowledge into Logic and Epistemology which deal respectively with the ways of attaining and interpreting knowledge. According to me, we cannot attain knowledge by reading either a book on epistemology or on logic; but a combined study of both may give us some theoretical notion of certain problems facing both. By means of reasoning, we cannot arrive at truth or knowledge in the true sense. For me, there is not much difference between reasoning and ratiocination.

Stace has correctly emphasized the limitations of rationalism as a method of attaining knowledge when he says:

'By means of reasoning we understand, no doubt, the full implications of our beliefs. But we do not arrive at those beliefs by means of reasoning. We reach them by means of constructions and assumptions together with an application of these to observation of fact. The function of reasoning is solely to ensure that these beliefs are consistent with one another.'

He further adds,

'We have, as a result of reasoning, no positive knowledge of any kind.'

I should like to quote another passage, which is very impressive, wherein Stace remarks:

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'Human knowledge is like a mosaic. Our various beliefs are the pieces which have to be fitted into one another. Reason does not supply the pieces, but it is the set of rules which tells us how to fit them together and to reject those which do not fit.'

Let me now pass on to the method of empiricism before I conclude my essay with mysticism which is purely concerned with intuition and revelation.

Empiricism as a method of attaining knowledge : This method has been propounded by many philosophers. The starting point of empiricism is experience based upon induction. In experience we start with the particular and arrive at a general conclusion common to all our experiences. As a contrast to rationalism, Montague maintains that

'empiricism is the opposite method of proving propositions by appealing to concrete and particular occurrences. . . . The empiricist, with his preference for proving his beliefs by appeal to specific cases, naturally holds that particulars are fundamental and that universal and abstract concepts and universal and necessary judgments are derived from them.'

But, what is this experience ?

We know by experience that our experiences are mostly unreliable. Individual experiences very often differ from each other, and though it is possible for us to form concepts on the basis of the common characteristics of our experiences, there are different stages in our lives when we find that what we experienced before differs from what we feel today ; and, with the maturity of thought, we begin to think more in terms of reason than of experience as understood in the ordinary sense.

Our experience of the external world, on which we base our beliefs have differed from time to time, and from individual to individual. If we go to the history of philosophy, we get several evidences to this fact ; and even among scientists, whose discoveries and inventions depend on observation and experience, we find that the conclusions of the earlier scientists are modified to a great extent, or even replaced, by their successors. This goes to prove that our experiences cannot be relied upon so long as our senses are defective ; our senses impose a limitation on our experiences, and so we can gain pure knowledge from experience only when we transcend these limitations. Our next step, therefore, should be to describe what is pure experience.

The Method of Intuition and Revelation : These methods are based upon pure experience because they are not tinged with any external evidence. Ordinary experience gives us external evidence of things, whereas pure experience gives us internal evidence of Reality. So, mystic experiences, because they are based upon intuition or revelation, cannot be regarded as experiences of maniacs, and so I feel that Montague is certainly wrong in minimising the importance of the method of intuition and revelation and especially when he criticises the mystics saying :

'What illumines the soul may darken the world ; and the mystic, in reading his own yearnings and feelings into nature, has often made poetry of what should be prose, and has prevented man from gaining that insight into material things on which even the spiritual progress is ultimately dependent.'

Secondly, I feel that Montague is indulging in very damaging and insulting criticism of the saints whereas in India we respect them considering them as persons possessing the most clear perspective of all problems of life, not only of the physical world but also of the mental and the spiritual. Hence, it is not understood how Montague thinks that 'the mystic vision is not itself a criterion of objective truth' ; and his criticism is most outrageous when he says :

'The asylums are full of persons who see visions and hear voices and have intuitions of unutterable truths which can easily be proved to be no truths at all by those in possession of their faculties.'

My simple answer to Montague's assertion or, doubt as I may call it, is to question whe-

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ther he had ever tried the methods preached by the saints and seers who assure that Reality can be realised by every body irrespective of caste, creed, or nationality. In answer to certain criticism of Montague which is revealed in the passages quoted above and in justification of my view-point, I may here quote some passages from Swami Vivekananda's chapter on Practical Vedanta.

Montague says :

> 'What illumines the soul may darken the world.'

Swami Vivekananda says, on the other hand, anticipating Montague's position :

> 'All the powers of the universe are already ours. It is we who have put our hands before our eyes, and cry that it is dark. . . . Darkness never existed, weakness never existed. . . .' (Vol. II, p. 293).

It has been accepted by many of his contemporaries both in the East as well as in the West that Swami Vivekananda was an 'illumined soul', and it is obvious from the passage quoted above that he has not contributed anything to 'darken the world'. As for 'the insight into material things' about which Montague mentions, we may answer him in the words of Swami Vivekananda :

> 'All the knowledge that we have in this world, where did it come from? It was within us. What knowledge is outside? None. Knowledge was not in matter; it was in man all the time. Nobody ever created knowledge; man brings it from within. . . . The whole of that big banyan tree which covers acres of grounds, was in the little seed which was perhaps no bigger than one-eighth of a mustard seed; all that mass of energy was there confined. The gigantic intellect, we know, has coiled up in the protoplasmic cell, and why should not the infinite energy?'

The passage quoted just now is an apt answer not only to Montague's doubt about the potentiality of spiritual insight, but also to his doubt about intuition and revelation as reliable and independent sources of knowledge.

As a further justification to my view-point, I may cite another passage which is a direct contradiction to Montague's statement criticised by us just now. Montague, herein, says :

> 'In favour of mysticism as a method of acquiring knowledge, it may fully be said that not only in philosophy, but in art, and even in science, some of the most significant ideas and ideals have originated from the intuitions of the mystic. Moreover, the belief which lies at the heart of all religion, that the soul of man can somehow unite itself with the substance of the universe and thereby attain to a vision of truth far surpassing in its depth and sublimity and in the peace, joy, and power that it brings, anything that mere reason or sense can afford is a product of mystical experience.'

We may quote another passage which also reveals the contradiction in his thought. He says :

> 'Intuition might be defined not only as imagination touched with conviction, but also as the outcome of subconscious induction or deduction.'

I agree with Montague in so far as he says that intuition is 'touched with conviction', but I do not regard this method either as an outcome of imagination (in which case it may become fictitious) or of subconscious induction. On the other hand, intuition and revelation should be regarded as an outcome of 'positive mysticism' which he himself praises.

With these remarks, let me now conclude with my opinions about the subject. First, I have here tried to maintain that pure knowledge and pure experience are identical with Wisdom, and that its attainment, and not mere intellectual possession, should be the aim of every man. Secondly, I have tried to show that authoritarianism is reliable only in so far as the authorities on whom we rely possess the characteristics of equanimity, poise, and wisdom. Thirdly, I do not attach much importance to the knowledge of the external world which depends upon the given, and which is limited by the subject-object relationship; and I have also tried to show that the given and the concepts framed out of it do not help us in the attainment of Wisdom and as such fall short of knowledge in the true sense. Fourthly, as for the other sources of knowledge such as rationalism and empiricism,

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I maintain that rationalism does not give us 'positive wisdom' (as Stace calls it) and that empiricism fails because sensory experience, on which it is based, is most unreliable. Finally, as for intuition and revelation, I strongly hold that they are undoubtedly most reliable and independent sources of knowledge provided we understand by these terms the method which leads us to pure experience which, in turn, gives us an internal evidence of Reality. Therefore, my answer to the question raised in the essay is: Surely, we can rely upon revelation and intuition, in their true sense, as independent sources of knowledge.

(*Concluded.*)

ALAMBAZAR MATH

And the Inception of the Vow of Service

(*Continued from the previous issue*)

SWAMI AKHANDANANDA

Swamiji arrives at Calcutta

After a good deal of deliberation a reception committee was formed with some of the elite of the city. It was arranged that from Budge Budge Swamiji should be brought to Calcutta in a special train.

Ramakrishnananda and I waited at the Math. For his reception we made a small gate, planted some banana trees and placed jars of water with mango twigs on them.

At Sealdah station there assembled a varied crowd to see him and to receive him. When Swamiji got on the carriage the horses were unharnessed and it was the college students who pulled it up to Ripon College on Mirzapur street. So big was the crowd that within the College a man was nearly crushed to death. Swamiji attempted to say something at that place; but due to excessive rush and noise he could not.

From Ripon College Swamiji was taken to the palatial building of Nandalal Basu at Nebubagan, Baghbazar. He took his midday meal there and in the afternoon came to Alambazar Math in a carriage pulled by one horse. We two took him with honour into the Math.

With Swamiji came to Calcutta, Captain Sevier of Norman extraction, Mother Sevier, Miss Muller and the famous shorthand writer Goodwin and others from London, Mr Harrison, a Buddhist from Colombo, and Alasinga Perumal, the first editor of the periodical *Brahmavadin,* 'G. G.' and 'Kiddy' from Madras. The reception committee lodged them at Gopal Seal's garden at Kasipur.

It was in that garden that people of various sorts and climes came to meet Swamiji. Almost every day Swamiji would come from the garden to Alambazar Math where he spent the night with us and went back to the garden on the morrow.

At the Math Swamiji gave us various kinds of advice for the maintenance of our health. Asked if we boiled and filtered our drinking water we showed him our filter and he said, 'Whatever you do, never forget to purify the drinking water in this way.'

He now taught us all, a sort of physical exercise called 'Delsart'. While doing it, with several manipulations one has got to bend the body backward and forward, to lower the right hand and left hand so that they might touch the ground and to turn the legs and head around. It would do much good

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to exercise the limbs in this manner for at least half an hour without undergoing any strain. This 'Delsart' then became the vogue in the Math.

There was another thing worth noting. For long three years at a stretch, he had been in the West and had used English for his talk and ordinary conversation. But now back to the homeland the songs of Gitagovinda (the famous Sanskrit book of songs of the poet Jayadeva) were always on his lips. Swamiji would often lose himself in humming in his sweet voice the piece *Nāmasametam kritasanketam vadayate mriduvenum* etc.

For some time before Swamiji's return from America a gentleman came everyday in the afternoon to the Math to sing us songs. He then stayed with a friend of his at a village nearby. Many would gather at the Math to hear him sing. He was a very sociable singer. He sat to sing with a harmonium and a pan full of prepared betels. He could sing two or three hours at a stretch. His stock was inexhaustible. He remembered almost all the songs of Nilkantha (a famous composer of Bengali devotional songs).

On Swamiji's return he sang as before in the Math for some days and we knew that he expected to please the Swami by his songs. Swamiji had no fixed time for coming from Gopal Lal Seal's garden. One afternoon on learning that Swamiji was in the Math he regaled a party with his songs in the outer room. Swamiji was then inside. I thought he would of himself come out to hear the songs. I was then with him. I found him absolutely indifferent. Marking it I said, 'My brother, for a long time this gentleman has been regularly coming to the Math to sing and charm the party assembled with his performance. We pay due attention to him. Do come out, please. Your absence will sorely disappoint the Brahman. But Swamiji said, 'What is the good of going out to hear that wailing of a Surpanakhā? Can anyone here sing as I have heard people sing in the West?' 'How is that,' said I, 'formerly were you not wont to say that there has been development of vocal music in India and instrumental music in the West?' 'I had to change that notion in the West,' said Swamiji gravely. 'Here there are only three octaves of the seven notes *Sā, Re, Gā, Mā, Pā, Dhā, Nī*. But there are four more octaves above them.'* He told me the English names of those four octaves, but I have forgotten them. As he was saying this the musical party in the outer room broke off. Since then, so far as I remember, the gentleman had never come to the Math. Probably he had the expectation of securing service in a prince's court by satisfying Swamiji with his songs.

The three devotees of Madras and Goodwin stayed mostly at the Math. The Madrasis had their separate kitchen in the Math. It is from them that I first tasted their favourite soup, 'Rasam'. Goodwin and Kiddy took their meal with us. Goodwin danced and sang in his boyish way. The piece *'Sankara Siva byom Bhola'* in his mouth was very sweet to hear. He would often catch hold of me and dance around.

The Sevier couple and Miss Muller probably never came to Alambazar Math. One day at about 10 a.m. we saw Mr Harrison of Ceylon alight from a hackney coach. We were in a hurry to fetch him a chair. Swamiji was pacing on the corridor of the inner part of the house; on enquiry we told him of Mr Harrison. At this he said, 'It is good for him not to sit on a chair in the court of his Guru (spiritual teacher).' So saying he stowed away in a room the two or three chairs we had. For over an hour he talked to him while pacing up and down and sent him off.

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* At present in our country there is vocal music in a developed stage, but there is hardly any opportunity for its culture. It must be admitted that in the West vocal music has had enormous development.

It is not clear in what sense Swamiji used the number seven. It may be he means the seven octaves of the piano and such like instruments. He might also mean the seven compasses used in vocal music in the West. The seven compasses or tunes are: Alto, Contralto, Bass, Mezzo-Soprano, Soprano, Tenore and Treble.

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At Alambazar Math Swamiji put up hammocks on the windows and read while swinging.

On his arrival at the Math the first thing I said to him was, 'All your arguments put forth in your speeches are based on Sruti and Smriti (the Vedas and other scriptures). From your lips I have heard so many contradictory views. But what a marvel, you are an absolutely changed person in your speeches. But, my brother, in this speech of yours you have gone against the Sruti by stating that man is never reborn as a beast. At another place again you have said that man in his successive births undergoes both progression and retrogression. I am in a fix and it is you that will have to solve my problem now.' At this he said, 'You are right. The stenographer who took notes of my speech did the mischief. He acquiesced in all my views, but he would never admit that man is reborn as a beast. After that speech had been printed I detected the error.' Then I called in Ramakrishnananda and as I told Swamiji about our talk on the point they began laughing. I too had a sense of relief.

Reception

The reception committee approached Maharaja Lakshmiswar Sinha of Darbhanga and Raja Pyarimohan Mukhopadhyay of Uttarpara to take the chair, but at the instance and because of the dissuasion of a group of men they refused. At last Raja Binoykrishna Deb of Sobhabazar palace occupied the chair. The meeting was held at the spacious courtyard of the palace of Maharaja Radhakanta Deb of Sobhabazar. That big palace was filled with people.

Before Swamiji's appearance at the meeting I brought to the palace Captain Sevier and Mother Sevier from Gopal Lal Seal's garden at Kasipur. On the dais were seated Swamiji's Western devotees, ladies and gentlemen, Raja Pyarimohan Mukhopadhyay and some others of the elite of the city. We of the Math stood behind Swamiji.

It is noteworthy how Swamiji, who had dedicated his life to the work of his Guru, delivered his speech in a modest and humble manner as a reply to the address presented to him. It charmed the whole assembly.

Swamiji's next address was from the platform of the Star Theatre of Calcutta. This speech compares well with his Madras speech, 'My plan of campaign' and the Lahore speech on Vedanta. He never again delivered such a lengthy fiery speech in Bengal.

Here I cannot help noting a thing both ridiculous and shameful. As I have heard, the reception committee afterwards presented a bill of rupees three hundred as expenditure in connection with the reception.

Address at the Star Theatre

On this occasion besides Surendranath Banerjee, the prince of orators, there were on the stage Dr Mahendralal Sarkar, Sri Anandamohan Basu, Dr Jagdish Chandra Bose and other members of the elite of the city.

I sat in the stall with Alasinga Perumal, 'G.G.', 'Kiddy', Swamiji's devotees of Madras, and others. Mr Goodwin, the famous stenographer and Swamiji's favourite disciple, sat near the foot lights and with ease took down the fluent speech of Swamiji. He sometimes looked at Alasinga and made faces at us. But the hand of the stenographer of the *Statesman* got stiff. At this Alasinga said, 'Mark what an able stenographer Goodwin is.' While the speech was going on I once came out and got on the stage. There it was whispered among the assembly that twenty grains of sugar had been found in one ounce of Swamiji's urine. They were planning to send Swamiji to Darjeeling in a day or two. In this state of his health it was no more safe to keep Swamiji at Calcutta.

Gondalpara

Just two days after, Swamiji was sent to Darjeeling and many including Goodwin accompanied him. Afterwards Swamis Brah-

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mananda, Turiyananda and some others followed.

Just before leaving for Darjeeling Swamiji asked Ramakrishnananda, staunch in his orthodoxy, to start for Madras as he was found fit for establishing a Math and inaugurating the service of the Master there. Swamiji's first Sanyasi disciple Sadananda accompanied him.

On the eve of the journey, at about eight at night, they went to see Girish Babu at Bosepara, Baghbazar. On the way a dog bit Sadananda. Next day they left for Madras.

I heard afterwards that on the day they started for Madras a dog in the locality had become rabid. I suspected that Sadananda had been bitten by the rabid dog. So the specific of Gondalpara had to be sent forthwith to Madras for him.

There were at Alambazar Math then, Swamis Premananda, Sivananda, Satchidananda, Turiyananda and some others. After Swamiji had left for Darjeeling the Math was practically empty and quiet.

On coming to the Math I told Satchidananda of my plan for going to Gondalpara. I took my noonday meal and at about 4 p.m. started with the only piece of cloth I wore, two rupees and a Lui (a coarse woollen wrapper). My idea was that I would be back by the next morning, then why take the trouble of carrying spare clothes?

I crossed the Ganga and from Bally station came to Chundernagore just at night-fall and went straight to Gondalpara Kalibari. Then as I explained things to the man who gave the medicine, he handed over to me a small tablet and asked me to write to Madras that for a period of three or four days, while taking the medicine, the patient should have only cool things like curd, rice, banana and milk of green cocoanut to eat. A rupee and a half of my two rupees was used up, as the man took one rupee and a quarter for the medicine and I had to pay four annas as railway fare from Bally to Chundernagore.

I spent the night with a gentleman of Gondalpara. I enclosed the medicine in an envelope with a letter giving directions about diet and other things. In Madras Swami Ramakrishnananda was to lodge at first at the Castle Kernan; I wrote that address on the letter and dropped it at Farasdanga Post office.

I spent the midday at Farasdanga and in the afternoon determined to go to Hooghly. I then always wished that wherever I might be I might have the company of devotees of the Master.

After a dip in the Ganga I got into a big house on the bank for my Bhiksha (Sanyasi's food begged from a householder). I thought the Bhiksha would not be after my heart if the donor were not a devotee of the Master. I afterwards came to know that a co-sharer of the estate of the landlords of Telinipara was the occupier of the house. He and another gentleman saw me and on learning from me that I belonged to the Master, burst into tears and said, 'Ah! what a Thakur had appeared! You are blessed!' As I found men after my heart my joy knew no bounds.

Hooghly

After my meal at the house I, in the afternoon, came to Hooghly by a small boat for the fare of two annas. Jogesh Babu and others lived in a house on the Ganga in Hooghly. Some seven or eight lawyers were there. Jogesh Babu and the other lawyers were overjoyed to have me in their midst, because a long time ago it had been settled that I should pay a visit to their house. We talked about the Master, Swamiji and my travel in Tibet and thus passed our time in joy till midnight.

In the morning after I had washed my face and hands I found a flat floating on the Ganga before us. On enquiry I learnt from Jogesh Babu that the steamer due here at about 11 a.m. would carry one to Santipur, Navadwip, Kalna and other places. The fare for Navadwip was one rupee.

With the departure of Swamiji for Darjeeling I had found the Math almost empty.

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In the interval I had a keen desire to visit Navadwip, the centre of activity of Gauranga Mahaprabhu and the seat of learning of Navya Nyaya (a school of Indian philosophy). For, I had then determined not to come back to Bengal in my life if I but once went away from there.

In the morning I told Jogesh Babu of my plan for going to Navadwip and wrote a letter to Alambazar Math to the effect. Jogesh Babu gave me a rupee and went to court.

On the way to Navadwip

Only a rupee and annas five and a half was all I had. At the steamer station I found many a passenger waiting. It was the eve of the Dol Purnimā festival in March, 1897. The steamer was due at 11 a.m. but it did not arrive even at 1 p.m. But two special steamers loaded with passengers for the Melā (fair) of Ghoshpara passed along the other bank of the Ganga. At 1 p.m. the booking clerk refunded the fare paid by the waiting passengers saying that the steamer had broken down and would not come that day. But such was my urge to go to Navadwip that very day that I consulted the booking clerk and crossed over to Naihati.

There was such a rush of passengers for Ghoshpara at Naihati that I could not make my way into the station. At about 10 p.m. I took a ticket for Bogoola and got into a train. It cost me probably eight annas. At dead of night I detrained at Bogoola and in the bright moonlight, I lay under a shed in the market place. I slept out the remaining part of the night. At dawn I washed my hands and face and wended my way to Krishnanagar.

At about 12 noon I reached the wayside village of Hanskhali on the river Khore. I bathed in the river and had a slight repast at a sweetmeat stall and resumed my walk. After paying for the refreshment there remained only ten annas in my pocket.

It was the early part of summer, the sun was very hot and I was feeling it hard to travel on foot. After I had gone some distance from Hanskhali my way lay through an avenue of large shady Sisu trees (a tree producing timber) and my trouble lessened. The traveller who walks along this dusty road in the hot summer blesses with upraised hands the kind Commissioner who built this avenue.

At night-fall I found myself too weak and tired to walk even a yard. A hackney coach was going to Krishnanagar with some lady passengers. On payment of two annas I secured a seat on the coach-box. I paid the coachman two annas and got down near the palace of the Maharaja of Krishnanagar. I then enquired about the house of Jogendranath Sen, a devotee of the Master, and went there.

It will be good to state here something about Jogen Sen. Jogen Sen would often go to the Master at Dakshineswar. He was a man of a simple and amiable nature. His office was in the Writers' Buildings, Calcutta, and he had his quarters in the northern part of the same building, downstairs. We often repaired to his lodgings and found great comfort there.

At Jogendra Sen's house in Krishnanagar I saw an oil painting of the Master and was sure that it was our Jogen's house. After some time his brother came out and said that Jogen was at Calcutta.

I spent the night there. Next day at 5 p.m. Jogen Sen's brother helped me to get into a boat, on the Khore river, bound for Navadwip. The whole night long the crew plied the boat with poles and I reached Navadwip one hour before day-break. On the boat I passed the remaining part of the night.

(To be continued.)

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GAYATRI UPASANA

M. P. PANDIT

Gayatri * is a satisfying book. It is a happy combination of the best from the past with the most enlightened thought of the present. The author, Sri I. K. Taimni, has assimilated the pure essence of the agelong Indian tradition, religious and spiritual, and in presenting his thoughts on an important aspect of it as represented in the Gayatri Upasana, has made full use of his knowledge of modern advances in physical and mental sciences to demonstrate and bring home its essential soundness and universal applicability to all effort at individual perfection.

The Gayatri is one of the most significant prayers in the Hindu hymnal scriptures. It is the only Mantra which appears unchanged in all the four Vedas. The importance attached to the Gayatri in the Vedic tradition has led to the rise of several Gayatris in later times, notably in the Tantras and allied literature. The Gayatri Mantra which is the subject of this work is the tenth Rik in the 62nd Sukta of the Third Mandala of the Rig Veda. Cast in *gayatri* metre of 24 syllables it is attributed to Rishi Vishvamitra and reads :

Tat savitur-varenyam bhargo devasya
dhimahi,
dhiyo yo nah pracodayat.

Or in English :

We meditate upon that excellent splendour of the Lord Savitr. May he activate our thoughts.

Its place in the Hindu ritual is too well known to be emphasised. It is its spiritual significance, the way in which it holds light to the inner development of man and harnesses so many powers in creation in its mantric body, that is usually lost sight of and now brought out with convincing appeal in this treatise by Sri Taimni. He points out that while there is a sufficient appreciation of the need of disciplines like Yoga for real self-culture and spiritual enlightenment, enough attention is not paid to the necessity of a minimum preparatory effort of purification and harmonisation of one's being for any serious endeavour in that direction. And it is here that the Gayatri Upasana plays a major role.

Before entering into the subject proper the author gives a helpful account of the rationale of the Mantra Sastra upon which is based the whole theory and practice of the Upasana. He writes :

> The basic doctrine underlying Mantra Yoga is that all this hard and tangible universe which we see around us is made up only of different kinds of vibrations and energies working at different levels. The things which appear so solid and real are not what they seem but are merely the result of the interplay of different kinds of energies and consciousness. Vibration lies at the basis of form using the word form in its widest sense. The manifested universe is full of an infinite number and variety of forms which we cognise with our sense-organs, physical or superphysical. Each of these forms is produced by vibrations and can be changed by changing the vibration. This is particularly true of forms which are natural and are produced according to a pattern by forces of Nature working behind them such as a tree, a human body or a solar system.[1]... That vibration is capable of producing forms can be illustrated very well by drawing a bow against the edge of a plate on which some sand is strewn. The vibration produced by the bow throws the sand particles into violent commotion and when these parti-

* *Gayatri*, by I. K. Taimni. Pub. Ananda Publishing House, 3A Lowther Rd., Allahabad. pp. 172. Price Rs. 4.

[1] The author observes :

'Forms of an artificial nature produced by the haphazard interaction of natural forces or through human agency belong to a different category. Although these forms are maintained by the interaction of forces and vibrations taking place between their constituent atoms *there is no overall vibration* apart from these forces as in the case of vital organisms.

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cles settle down beautiful patterns are formed depending upon the nature of the vibration.

Behind every living form there is a particular vibration which keeps the different components of the form together as an organic whole and when that vibration ceases the form falls apart. The Anahata Sabda heard by the sadhakas of certain schools of mysticism is such a vibration. These vibrations do not necessarily take place on the physical plane. They can take place on different planes, their nature depending upon the nature of the form and the life which ensouls that form... Another important principle... is that vibration not only lies at the basis of form but is also necessary for the manifestation of consciousness... We become aware of the external world through vibrations of different kinds. Light vibrations produce visual sensations, sound vibrations the sensation of hearing and so on. If these vibrations are cut off completely the manifestation of consciousness on the physical plane will cease and it will recede into the next subtler vehicle as in the case of sleep... The fundamental fact we have to grasp and keep in our mind is that vibration, form and consciousness are related to one another in a very intimate manner and affect one another in all kinds of ways. This relation between the three is rooted in the primary process of manifestation from Reality... the whole manifested universe is essentially the result of an all-inclusive and all-embracing vibration called Nada. This subtlest vibration can by its differentiation and sub-division give rise to an infinite variety of vibrations which underlie all phenomena of Nature and produce all kinds of forms. These forms of various degrees of complexity built up by long processes of evolution provide vehicles for consciousness and enable it to function on different planes in an infinite variety of ways and to affect or be affected by the phenomena of these planes.

If vibration is related to both form and consciousness, it should be possible through its agency to produce different kinds of natural phenomena on the one hand and to bring about changes in consciousness on the other... Mantra Yoga is that branch of Yoga in which the powers hidden in certain combinations of sounds are utilised for the unfoldment of human consciousness. Japa which means physical or mental repetition of mantras produces vibrations on different planes and these vibrations affect the vehicles or koshas of the sadhaka and the changes produced in the vehicles make it possible for the sadhaka to reach his deeper layers of consciousness. The vibrations slowly rearrange the matter of the different vehicles and harmonise them in such a manner that new states of consciousness can manifest in these vehicles... The aim of all such mantras, in short, is to purify and harmonise the vehicles of the sadhaka so that they become increasingly sensitive to the subtler layers of his own spiritual consciousness. As he comes into contact with these he becomes increasingly aware of that Reality of which his own consciousness is a partial expression. (Ch. III)

In other words, the technique of the Mantra Sastra is to so use the power of Sound as to bring about changes in the states of one's own consciousness, to invoke and draw upon the higher States or Powers of Consciousness through the agency of Sound-powers which have affinity with or related to those higher formulations of the Supreme Consciousness. The ancients carried their researches into this science of Sound to a remarkable extent and to them were revealed, in course of their inner discipline, some of these key sounds or sound-bodies which they clothed in nearest equivalents in human speech. These sounds, combinations of sounds, words, are the Mantras which are celebrated in the Vedas and the Tantras. They are either perceived or revealed or self-cultured in the depths of one's consciousness. They are not, we have to note, 'constructed' after experimental permutations and combinations as stated by the author (p. 40). A real Mantra is already formed before it reaches the level of the human consciousness; it arises in the being of the seer, drașțā, when the 'constructing' mind is silent.

The Gayatri is one such Mantra of major importance. The prescribed form in which it is chanted is :

Om. Bhūr Bhuvaḥ Svaḥ. Tat savitur vareṇyam bhargo devasya dhīmahi, dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt.

For purposes of study the author would divide the Mantra into three parts viz.,

1. The Pranava (Om) and the three *Mahā vyāhritis* (*bhūḥ bhuvaḥ, svaḥ*) ;
2. *Tat savituh varenyam bhargah devasya dhimahi* ;
3. *dhiyah yo nah pracodayat.*

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He points out :

> 'The purpose of the first part is to arouse in the vehicles of the sadhaka certain powers which prepare the ground for the effective functioning of the second and third parts. These powers are aroused through the agency of sound or vak which harmonises the vehicles and attunes them to the forces from the higher planes and thus makes it possible for the higher states of consciousness to manifest through them. The second part is meant to stimulate in the mind of the sadhaka an intense aspiration or determination to come in contact with the consciousness of the Savita the presiding Deity of our solar system. The third part is meant to bring about an attitude of self-surrender or atma-samarpana which is essential for the descent of Divine grace or Kripa. (p. 57)

Now to come to the meaning and word-significance of the Mantra ; *Om* is the sound-symbol of Brahman, the nearest equivalent to the original Vibration, *Nāda,* which manifests the Brahman. *Brahmano nediṣtham pratīkam.* Through this unique Word of Call, the Supreme is invoked and adored excellently (*prakarṣena nūyate anena itipraṇavaḥ.*).

After the Supreme Divine, the Divinities that preside over the planes of existence in which we live are invoked for their Grace. They are the Gods, Agni presiding over Earth — the domain of the Physical, Vayu over the Mid-region of Life-force, and Aditya over the Heavens of the Mind ; and the words of Call, the Bija Mantras of each of these are the celebrated *vyahritis* viz. *bhūḥ, bhuvaḥ, svaḥ.* As these Deities are derived from Brahman, their respective words of Call *vyāhritis,* also are derived from the Word of Brahman. The Chhandogya Upanishad narrates an interesting story on the subject (IV. 17) :

> Prajapati brooded upon the worlds. And by the force of his brooding he extracted their essences ; Agni from the Earth, Vayu from the Antariksha and Aditya from the Heaven.
>
> Upon these three Deities he brooded. And by the force of his brooding he extracted their essences ; Riks from Agni, Yajus from Vayu and Samans from Aditya.
>
> Upon this threefold Knowledge he brooded. And by the force of his brooding he extracted their essences : Bhuh from the Riks, Bhuvah from Yajus and Svah from the Samans.

And elsewhere (II. 23) it records :

> Prajapati brooded upon the worlds. From them, by the force of his brooding issued forth the threefold knowledge. He brooded upon this. From it, so brooded upon, issued forth these syllables : *bhū, bhuvaḥ, svaḥ.*
>
> He brooded upon them. From them, so brooded upon, issued forth the syllable Om.

Thus by the chant of the supreme Word of Call Om, and the utterance of the three Mahavyahritis of Bhuh, Bhuvah, Svah, the Omnipresent Divine and the specific Divinities governing the spheres of existence of which man is a part are invoked, and the sadhaka puts himself in rapport with them. He awakes to an active awareness of the all-pervading Brahman, his will and aspiration stand energised, his life-energy quickened and his mental faculties alert at the remembrance of the gods, of their origin — Agni, Vayu and Aditya respectively. Thus prepared the sadhaka chants the main mantra. It begins :

> *Tat savitur varenyam bhargo devasya dhimahi,*
> We meditate upon that excellent splendour of the Lord Savitr.

Savitr is the subject of invocation and meditation. Savitr, it must be noted, is not the physical sun in the sky as generally taken. Savitr is the Lord Creator whose glorious symbol in the universe is the solar orb we call the sun. The splendour of Savitr is the effulgence of the Divine Creative Energy which is active on all the many planes of Creation and figured and rendered by the Sun of each plane. That Savitr is not just the physical sun but is in fact a concentration of the Creative Power of the Divine which ushers in all creation and sustains all on its destined course is very evident from the utterances of the Vedic Rishis themselves. To the seers of the Veda who have bequeathed the Gayatri, He is the Prime Creator, Prajapati,[2] the One who releases (*su* to release, to loose forth, to deli-

[2] Vamadeva. IV. 53.

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ver) the many into birth and manifestation; He is the Premier who is followed by other Gods. He has the sun for his lofty banner, *urdhva ketuh.*[3] He is well-expressed by the beams of the sun, *surya-rashmibhih samueyasi.* Thus hymns Seer Shyavashva :

> Knowing all phenomena he orders, sole, the Energies of the sacrifice. Vast is the affirmation in all things of Savitr, the divine Creator. All forms he takes into himself, the Seer, and he creates from them good for the twofold existence and the fourfold. The Creator, the supreme God, manifests Heaven wholly and his light pervades all... In the wake of his march the other gods also reach by his force to the greatness of the Divinity. He has mapped out the realms of earthly light by his mightiness, — the brilliant one the divine Creator... And thou reachest, O Savitr, to the three luminous heavens; and thou art utterly expressed by the rays of the Sun... And thou art powerful for every creation; and thou becomest the Increaser, O God, by thy movings. (Rv. V. 81)

Sarvāntaryamitayā prerakasya jagatsraṣṭuḥ, the Lord Creator who abides in all and guides all, says Sayana (Rv. III.62.10).

The author draws some of the later texts and quotes from *Yajnavalkya Samhita* which says :

> 'The Light of lights, the superb Light which is hidden in the sun is there in the heart of creatures in the form of consciousness. The Light which shines in the outer sun broods in the ether of the Heart... The Glory that abides in the form of consciousness in the heart of creatures is also there aglow as the Person in the Sun of the sky.'[4]

Mark the words, the outer sun, *bahya suryasya* and he adds :

> The underlying principles of Gayatri Upasana point out that the physical Sun which we see and which alone Science has studied is merely an outer cover of a glorious Reality which pervades and energises the whole solar system... They indicate that this Reality is in essence and fundamentally the same as the Reality which is hidden in the heart of every human being... And lastly they bring out clearly that in finding this Reality within himself the sadhaka can invoke the Reality hidden behind the Sun, and through the help which he gets from this Supreme Source of spiritual illumination make his task of Self-discovery easier. (Pp. 73-74).

Then follows the fervant prayer : *dhiyah yo nah pracodayāt.* May he activate our thoughts.

We meditate upon the Supreme vivifier, the highest Director of all Intelligences in creation, we adore Him. May He guide, may not merely guide, but activate and impel with His innate Knowledge and Power our highest faculties of Thought, our understandings and formulations, so that — as the Seer says in the succeeding Riks — with our mental consciousness developed in its full opulence, *purandhyā,* we may attain to the Bounty of the Lord of Plenty, and impelled by such illumined Thought, *dhiyā isitah,* surrender ourselves unto the Lord, who, in the words of the Svetasvatara Upanishad :

> Yoking the gods (senses) heaven-aspiring, with the mind and the intelligence (so illumined), Savitr regenerates them to manifest the luminous Vast Light.[5]

II

This Gayatri Mantra is not merely used for Japa and Meditation but forms part of several kinds of worship. Also the Gayatri itself is worshipped as the Gayatri Devi, the Shakti of Savitr. A significant ritual has thus grown around the Gayatri and our author describes in interesting detail the *Gayatri Upāsana,* the prescribed mode and order for the practice of the inner and outer worship centred round the Mantra.

There is first the *Viniyoga Mantra*[6] which is recited giving the name of the Rishi, the Metre and the name of the Deity invoked. He explains :

> The Rishi of the mantra is that particular seer or adept who discovered or rather constructed

[3] Rv. IV. 14. 2.

[4] The author also quotes the famous verses (15 & 16) from the Isha Up. addressed to the Lord in the Sun.

[5] *Yuktvaya manasa devansuvaryato dhiya divam Brahajjyotih karishyatah savita prasuvāti tan* (II. 3)

[6] Cf. *Gayatri* by Sri I. K. Taimni, p. 171.

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it... or obtained it from a still higher source by means of tapasya... in reciting the viniyoga mantra we remember the Rishi not merely as a token of our gratitude to him but chiefly to put ourselves in touch with him and draw from him inspiration and force. (p. 102)

The chhandas of a mantra defines its peculiar structure which may belong to anyone of a large number of types. Number plays the most important part in the science of chhandas because it underlies form and determines the nature of sound... (p. 104)

The Devata of a mantra is the particular manifestation of Divine Consciousness whose power is expressed through the mantra and with whose consciousness the sadhaka wants to unite his own consciousness in japa. (p. 105)

Discussing the Viniyoga of the Gayatri, the author makes an interesting observation that the Rishis of the Pranava, the Maha-vyahritis and Gayatri being Brahma, Prajapati and Vishwamitra respectively according to the Viniyoga Mantra and Prajapati and Vishvamitra being also appellations of Brahma the Creator, the Rishi of the entire Gayatri can be taken to be Brahma ; in any case it is not the Vishvamitra of the Puranas. (p. 106).

The chhandas of Pranava is *gayatri* ; of the three vyahritis, *gayatri, ushnik* and *anushtup* ; of the main gayatri mantra it is *gayatri* (metre).

The Devatas are : of Pranava, Agni ; of Bhuh, the first vyahriti, it is again Agni ; of Bhuvah and Svah, the second and third vyahritis, the Devatas are Vayu and Aditya ; of the main Gayatri, Savitr..

Prior to the invocation there is what is called the ritual of purification, *shuddhi*, which summons the various faculties of oneself to attention to the serious purpose on hand, separates the dross and cleanses the being, rendering it fit to commune with the Deities. Different mantras are used in different sects. Our author illustrates with three popular Mantras which are :

In whatever condition a man is, whether pure or impure, he becomes purified, both externally and internally, the moment he turns his mind to Vishnu, the Lotus-eyed.[7]

The Seers ever behold the Supreme seat of Vishnu, like an eye extended in the heaven.[8]

In both the Mantras, it will be noted, the practicant, *upāsaka,* reminds himself that there is a higher State of Consciousness and Being beckoning to him whatever his present imperfections ; he has only to aspire and direct his faculties to the Divine who effects, in His Grace, the necessary purification in his being enabling him to behold the revelation of His own Glory.

Next, the author cites a remarkably comprehensive Mantra[9] which in turn consists of four component Mantras :

Om. Raising the Jiva Shiva from the mountain of bhutas along the Sushumna canal I unite him with that State which is called Parama Shiva.

Svaha ; *Svāh* denoes sankalpa, determination.

Om. Yam. Dry up, dry up the subtle body. Svah ! (Prayer to Vayu Devata, *yam* being the bijakshara of Vayu).

Om. Ram. Burn, burn up the limiting bodies. (Prayer to Agni Devata, ram being the bijakshara of Agni)

Om. Paramashiva. Along the path of the Sushumna, on the mountain of matter, blow, blow upon, inflame, inflame, illumine, illumine. He am I, I am He, Svah.

(Prayer to Parama Shiva himself to send down his Breath of awakening, precipitation and release into a state of complete identification between the individual jivatma and the Paramatma.)

We do not enter here into the full import of the Mantra. It is a subject by itself and Sri Taimni has done justice to it in his able exposition of the fundamentals of the Kundalini Yoga as implied in the Mantra.

After the preparation comes Dhyana, meditation on the Devata. The Dhyana begins with a powerful call to the Devi, *āvāhana,* to appear. The Mantras cited here for the purpose are :

[7] Ibid, p. 112.
[8] Ibid, p. 117.
[9] Ibid, pp. 119, 120.

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Om. O Goddess, come Thou showering boons.

O Thou of three syllables, O Thou revealer of Brahman,

O Gayatri, mother of Chhandas, O Thou source of the Vedas, Salutations to Thee.[10]

Om. Come boon-giving Goddess and be present at my prayer.

Since Thou savest by being sung, therefore Thou art called Gayatri.[11]

This is followed by contemplation of the Devi in the form in which it is laid down in the Dhyana-Mantra. Each Deity has its own Dhyana Mantra based upon the realisation of its Seer and always verifiable in the experience of those who have the requisite competence. In the case of Gayatri, however there is an interesting variation in the forms in which She is to be contemplated at different periods of the day. Gayatri

'is Brahmani in the morning, Vaishnavi at noon and Rudrani in the evening... Morning is the time when creative forces are predominant in Nature and as Brahma represents the creative functions of Ishwara it is his influence which can most profitably be sought by the sadhaka at this time. At noon it is the forces of preservation which are predominant and therefore Vishnu is the presiding Deity of this part of the day. He is the Preserver who keeps in balance the forces of creation and destruction and it is therefore his influence which is invoked at this time of the day. In the evening it is the forces of destruction which become strong and since destruction is the function of Rudra naturally it is His influence which pervades Nature and can most profitably be utilised at this time.'

Here are the Dhyana Mantras for the morning, mid-day and the evening :

Refulgent red as the rising sun, book and rosary in hand, the Brahmic force in deer-hide clad, such form think ye, while stars still shine.

Azure-coloured and four-armed, conch and discus in each hand, club and lotus holding Goddess, seated in the Solar orb.

White-hued, in snow-white garment clad, seated on the Bull of Might, Three-eyed, with boon and bond in hand, with lance and drum armed.[12]

There is also, the author mentions, what may be called a universal Dhyana mantra which can be used at any time of the day irrespective of the period. It reads :

White-complexioned they say is Gayatri in silken shining garment dressed,

White sandal-paste perfumes her skin with flowers white and jewels decked,

In solar orb her home you find, in Brahma-world also she dwells,

With rosary in hand is she, on lotus flower auspicious one.[13]

The Dhyana on the *form* gradually melts into dhyana on the qualities, powers, nature etc., of the Personality behind the form. This is followed by Japa of the Gayatri Mantra.[14] The conclusion of the sitting is always signalised by the Visarjana or the Farewell Mantra e.g.

O Goddess thou comest out of the mouth of Mahesha and dwellest in the heart of Vishnu, being ordered thereto by Brahma. Now depart wherever it pleases Thee.[15]

To sum up in the words of the author :

After the avahan mantra has been recited and the mental image of the Ishta Devata has been formed, the next step is to meditate on the Ishta Devata for some time using the image merely as a focus of one's attention. This involves two processes. First, to form a clearly defined image and train the mind to keep it in the focus of consciousness without allowing it to slip away, as it is prone to do time and again. When the image can be held steadily in the mental focus for some time the second step is to start the activity of the mind in relation to the nature, powers and functions of the Ishta Devata against the background of the mental image. The sadhaka should try to go behind the purely physical form and understand the nature of the Ishta Devata as far as the mind will allow him to do so... the sadhaka must gradually acquire what may be called the tech-

10 & 11 Ibid, p. 169.

12 Ibid, p. 170.

13 Ibid, pp. 170, 171.

14 In an interesting passage of the Upanishads, it is stated that while japa of Gayatri in the evening destroys the *sin* done in the course of the day and japa in the morning destroys the sins of the night, one who repeats Gayatri at midnight attains fulfilment of speech.

15 Cf. *Gayatri* by Sri I. K. Taimni, p. 172.

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nique of unveiling by constant effort the inner significance of the ideas and ideals which form the content of his meditation. This inner significance is not an idea but a state of consciousness of which the idea on the mental plane is merely like a faint or blurred reflection. It is a thing to be realised and not thought about... Meditation is followed by Japa... the final aim of meditation and japa is the same, namely, to know the reality hidden behind the form or the mantra by the fusion of the sadhaka's consciousness with that of his Ishta Devata. (Ch. IX)

That brings us to the close of this superbly practical book on Gayatri Upasana. Not all the long quotations we have made can do full justice to the author's clarity of thought, earnestness of purpose and accuracy in exposition. This is a work to be read and re-read.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

Swami Siddhinathananda is a monk of the Ramakrishna Order.

Prof. M. K. Venkatarama Iyer is a retired Professor of Philosophy of the Annamalai University.

Sri S. Kalyanam is an alumnus of the Vivekananda College, Madras.

Dr Matilal Das, M.A., B.L., Ph.D. is a Retd. Dist. and Sessions Judge, West Bengal, Secretary, Vishwa Bharat Sanskriti Parishat and a renowned writer and speaker.

The article 'Gayatri Upasana' by Sri M. P. Pandit, a linguist and a scholar from Aurobindo Ashrama, Pondicherry, is a review article on the book *Gayatri* by Sri I. K. Taimni. The writer has also contributed his own thoughts supported by quotations from the scriptures, bringing to the fore the deep significance of that single *mantra, gayatri.*

THE EDUCATION THAT WE NEED

Education in the present set up has come to mean book learning and acquisition of diverse knowledge. But is that all? Is there nothing else which can or rather should be more properly regarded as education? What has our education done? No doubt it has gone a long way to ameliorate the sufferings of the masses. It has turned out many eminent scientists, and engineers, physicians and physicists, scholars and economists. But it has also made man a machine and the higher values of life have been almost forgotten. He works mechanically, the humane approach to problems has been forgotten and what seems to prevent a person from ruining another is only the fear of punishment. If by any chance one gets an opportunity to ruin another either in vindictiveness of some wrong done or for self-gratification one does not lose it. Today there are thousands of criminal and civil courts in India whose work is on the increase every day, all these happen because the emphasis is laid only on the material side of education.

On the other hand the Indian idea of education was quite different. Humility was the criterion of education. There is one episode narrated in the Upanishads to illustrate this point. A parent sends his son to a preceptor and after a study of twelve years the son returns to the parental home at the age of twenty four, an age at which at present the father, at least in urban places, is afraid to advise the son. But the parent in this case was tactful and fearless. He observes that the son's demeanour showed arrogance of learning. But this was opposed to all canons of learning of that time. Learning was to generate

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THE MESSAGE OF SAINT THAYUMANAVAR: By K. Ramachandra, Editor, 'Religious Digest', H. Jayanthipura, Talangama, Ceylon. Pages 67.

This is the revised edition of the paper read by the author at the International Congress for the History of Religions held at Marburg University, West Germany in September 1960 on the Message of Saint Thayumanavar, the noted Saivite philosopher of South India. The speech is full of material about the saint and his message.

T. S. RAGHAVAN

YOGA FOR LAYMEN: By Sri V. P. Kumaran, Norris Road, Singapore. Pages 133. Price Rs. 10.

The book deals only with the technique of yoga-asanas (physical postures) primarily and to some extent Pranayama also. The few books available on the subject in the market do not seem to do full justice to the subject. But Sri V. P. Kumaran has dealt with the theory and practice of the yoga-asanas, keeping in view the 'maintenance of health' of 'layman', thoroughly and scientifically, giving details of the various stages, how they are to be practised to reap full benefit out of them. He has ably demonstrated the effects of various asanas on the body, along with particular cautions to be observed, and also shown the way to get rid of some of the chronic and wasting diseases of the body, of course, without recourse to drugs.

The author has not forgotten to add the essential chapter on pranayama, showing the importance of the influence of the mind on the body. The systematic practice of these exercises may not result in producing a muscular and spectacular physique, but certainly it bestows on its votary a healthy body.

Though the book is a bit costly, it is worth its price. All the asanas thoroughly described in the book, have been well illustrated stage by stage. People even without any personal guidance can profit by following the book.

S. S.

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, SHILLONG

REPORT FOR JANUARY 1960 TO MARCH 1961

The Shillong branch conducted the following activities during the year.

1. Medical: (a) Charitable Dispensary: During the period 47,528 patients in the Allopathic Section and 18,820 patients in the Homoeopathic Section were treated, out of which 28,636 and 11,333 were new cases respectively. The cases treated in different sections were: Laboratory—1,138; X-ray — 280; Eye — 545; E.N.T. — 925; Minor Surgical cases — 241 and Vaccination — 7,873. (b) Mobile (Rural) Dispensary started its work during the year at Nartiang, a village about 40 miles away from Shillong and later another centre was opened at Laitkro, about 16 miles away from Shillong, which was visited regularly once a week. This section is gradually gaining popularity and treated 3,429 cases during the year.

2. Educational and Cultural: (a) The Vivekananda Library and Reading Room with 4,914 books, 27 periodicals and 12 newspapers, issued 9,878 books. During the period 236 books were added. Daily average attendance in the Reading Room was 43. (b) Students' Home: The Home had 27 boys on the roll of whom 4 were full free and 4 part free. 120 religious classes were held specially for the boys in the Students' Home. (c) L. P. School: The School in the nearby Harijan Colony had 33 students on its roll. (d) Night School at Nartiang: The number of students were 21. (e) Sarada Samsad: A cultural unit for children, through art, music and extra curricular activities, had more than hundred classes and discourses. The number of the alumni was about 30.

3. General: (a) During the year, 78 classes in the Ashrama and 16 classes in other localities were held. 'Ramanama Sankirtanam' and Bhajans were arranged in several places on invitation. 6 public meetings, including Documentary film shows were arranged. (b) Anniversaries and Festivals: Birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna Deva, the Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda were solemnly observed. Sri Sri Durga Puja, Kali Puja, Saraswathi and Lakshmi Pujas were celebrated with due solemnity. Srimat Swami Vishuddhanandaji Maharaj, the Vice-President of the Ramakrishna Mission stayed for three weeks at the Ashram in April, 1960. He gave a dozen religious discourses. (c) Publication department: The Ashrama published during the year 'Satprasanga' Part II by Srimat Swami Vishuddhanandaji and 'Sri Sri Chaitanya Deva' by Swami Saradeshananda in Bengali.

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.... Be bold and face
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease.
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XLVIII DECEMBER 1961 No. 8

FROM THE TREE OF DIVINE LORE

'I was born of none. I was nourished by none. I left heaven because I could not be contained in it and came down to the dusty earth of my own accord. I have neither father nor mother, I am infinite, I am everywhere; — It is by mistake that men have called me Sachal.

He for whom I sought the star-readers,
Beloved! He was with me.
He for whom I sought the oracles,
He was with me.
He is not a guest, but the Beloved,
and He is always with me.
He for whom I passed sleepless nights,
He was with me.
He for whom I shed tears of separation,
He was with me.
I looked for Him here,
I looked for Him there,
But I looked not for Him within me.
None is so near as He.
The dearly Beloved is in the heart.
The nightingale is in the garden of the body.
The ocean of Love is within.
Look for the Beloved deep down in your self.
The flowers are in the garden,
The moon too is in the garden.
Says Sachal, 'the Beloved is known at last!
I saw Him in my own heart. Robed in radiance,
He came within the ken of my mind.'

Sai Sachal:
— from Gurdial Mallik's "Divine Dwellers in the Desert".

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THE HOLY MOTHER

The Hindu ideal of life : It is the objective world, palpably felt and tangibly experienced, that attracts attention and holds sway over the men living on the gross plane. The vast majority of mankind belongs to this class. To these the material world is more real, than anything else. But the sages, to whom was revealed the true nature of things, held a different view. They arrived at a conclusion which the mammon worshipping material man could never believe or acquiesce in if it was narrated to him plainly. A higher type of imagination was absolutely necessary for its comprehension. This imagination could be cultivated by a regulated life and years of practice. They therefore, laid down a code of conduct by following which man's vision would clear, would enable him to see things in their proper perspective, and would loosen his attachment to things worldly.

The varna dharma and ashrama dharma were the outcome of a deep study of human nature, and aptitudes and tendencies of individuals. These systems were not meant to proclaim superiority of one varna over the other nor to bestow on any the right of tyranny. They were introduced with the ultimate aim of yielding benefit to the community as a whole, as well as to the individuals forming the community. The classification was done according to the predominance of the qualities in and actions of the individuals.[1] Every ashrama and varna was considered great in its own place. It was the considered opinion of the sages that the duties enjoined on each if properly carried out could help the individual to attain the *summum bonum* of life, as well as be beneficial to society. Vyasa, the great sage and law-giver, gives the illustration of the dutiful housewife and the *vyadha* (hunter), in the Mahabharata, who by performing their duties in their own spheres of life viz., varnas and ashramas, reached the highest knowledge. Sri Krishna concurs with Vyasa on this point when he says, 'By worshipping Him with the performance of one's own duties man attains to perfection.'[2]

But these teachings though given repeatedly and lived perceivably slip easily from our minds, for the natural inclination of man is to gravitate towards the lower instincts. This makes it incumbent on the divine Being to send His messengers or even to incarnate Himself to cleanse humanity of its dross, lift it up from the morass and rejuvenate the society.

Holy Mother, the *parama prakriti*, the Primordial Power, incarnated Herself to aid the Lord in, and continue His work of uplifting the masses grovelling in the mire of worldliness. This time she came as a simple village woman who to all outward appearances lived an uneventful life. There was not any outward manifestation of her grandeur, there was no performance of miracles. It was all the inward manifestation, it was all silent like the morning dew which brings into blossom myriads of flowers. Her grace fell on all who sought her. She came to teach by her life. How could any one accept her life as practicable if outwardly also it was too exalted and baffling one's understanding? It was natural therefore, that she manifested the human aspect more than the divine in her outward life. She did not dazzle the eyes of those who came in her presence but soothed them like the cool rays of the moon. As the uncle moon is everybody's uncle so the Mother too was everyone's mother. However, it is not a fact that she did not reveal the Divine aspect at all, that privilege of knowing her as the Divine was but bestowed on a very few intimate disciples, for others she was a loving mother. She lived an ideal life of a daughter,

[1] चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्म विभागशः ।
Gita, 4. 13.

[2] स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ।
Gita, 18. 46.

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a sister, a wife and a mother and demonstrated how station in life was no barrier for one's leading a spiritual life.

Our law-givers said that human life shall be divided into four periods called *ashramas* viz. student, (*brahmacharya*) ; householder, (*garhasthya*) ; forest-dweller (*vanaprastha*) ; and the recluse (*sannyasa*) . In this division the garhastyha, the householder's stage was a stage involving the highest responsibility. It was the householder who was the prop of the society, and around whom revolved the other three ashramas. The righteousness or degradation of a society depended upon him. On him devolved the responsibility of providing incentive for proper education to the future generation. On him depended the *vanaprasthis* and the *sannyasis* for their meagre maintenance.

The householder was therefore placed under heavy obligations which the sages named as the five sacrifices (unselfish actions). He had to discharge these obligations to be free from his indebtedness to the gods, sages and manes. By performing daily duties enjoined in the scriptures he was to discharge the debt to the devas, by the study of the scriptures he was to discharge the debt due to the Rishis and to the manes by the performance of shrādda. The fellowmen, the way-farers, the stragglers who happened to be at the door of the householder and needed his help were to be attended to. The creatures of the lower species were also to receive his attention.[3] Such was the deep indebtedness that the householder had to discharge before he could pronounce of having lived the ideal life envisaged by the Hindu sages.

The list of injunctions seem to be appalling but that was the ideal and that was to be adhered to if any one desired to attain progress in life, desired to have peace of mind. But as it happens in the case of every good rule and custom, the rights only remained and the duties were forgotten. People became self-seeking, self-aggrandising, assertive and overbearing, conveniently forgetting the nobler virtues enjoined on them. It was to revive, to rejuvenate and to re-establish the neglected nobility and excellence of the Indian ideal of life, apart from rescuing us from the tentacles of the worldly octopus, that Holy Mother incarnated on earth.

She had a fourfold role to play : as the saviour, as the exemplar of the householder, as the exemplar of the all renouncing sannyasins and above all as the ideal of womanhood. And how she combined and assimilated all the roles in herself is a subject that is worth our study.

We see the compassionate saving aspect in Holy Mother from her very childhood. When famine had broken out in the neighbouring villages of her native place her pious father had opened out his meagre store of rice and pulses, poor though he himself was, and served cooked food to those who came to his house. Sometimes this cooking went on till late in the evening. People who came with famished bodies and haggard looks were impatiently gobbling down the hot food and Holy Mother though a girl of eleven then, felt greatly for them and in her small capacity tried to serve them by fanning the hot food in her effort to cool it down. Later days showed how this compassion did expand not only in the physical amelioration of the sufferings of people but in the spiritual redemption too. Aware though she was of the limitations of many of the devotees that came to her for spiritual light, she accepted them all without discriminating. Towards the fallen and the lowly, her compassion tended spontaneously, for did they not need her care more than the upright and the good ? On rare occasions when the Divine in her spoke out her true identity there would come the words of solace and succour. To a hesitant devotee who did not want to burden the Mother with his sins by touching her feet she said, ' No, my child, we are born for this purpose. If we do not accept others' sins and sorrows and do not assimilate these, who else will do so ? Who else will bear the responsibilities of the sinners and the afflicted ? '

[3] *Manu Samhita* IV. 21.

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But this acceptance of the sins of all and sundry sometimes caused her immense physical misery, in the form of a burning sensation all over the body, yet her motherly heart never brooked the idea of screening the devotees who came to her. She suffered them all to come. To her attendants who suggested to the Mother or parleyed amongst themselves to pick and choose the devotees before allowing them into her presence, she used to admonish, 'Am I not their mother too, is it not my duty to console whoever comes to me?' This type of assurance could come only from a divine personage and none else. We are reminded here of Sri Ramachandra's declaration to Sugriva when the latter was pleading for the non-acceptance of Vibhishana as an ally. Vibhishana, he suggested, being the brother of Ravana might have some ulterior motive for his surrender. Sri Ramachandra had then said, 'To him who takes shelter and seeks protection saying but once "I am thine" I assure him fearlessness from all beings. This is my vow and in this there shall be no discrimination, be he Vibhishana, Sugriva or Ravana himself. I have given him shelter, suffer him to come to me.'[4] That was the true spirit which moved the saviour in Holy Mother to be generous even to a fault towards people. Her compassion and grace was not limited by the distinctions of class, caste or religion. She was regarded as mother even by Muslim dacoits of the village of Jayarambati, and her love towards them was not a whit less because of their professing a different faith.

It is beyond the capacity of the ordinary mortals to know her. If at all we have to get a little glimpse of her true identity we have to have recourse to the writings and utterances of the immaculately pure disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. Swami Premananda writing about her in a letter said, 'Who has understood the Holy Mother? Who can understand her? You have heard about Sita, Savitri, Vishnupriya and Radharani. The Holy Mother occupies a far higher place. Not even the slightest trace of divine powers was noticeable in her. Sri Ramakrishna, however, had the Vidya-powers. Many were the occasions when we witnessed his trances and ecstasies. But in the Holy Mother even the Vidya-powers were elided. What a supreme power that! Don't you see how many people are rushing on! The poison which we cannot digest, we just pass on to the Mother. And she gives refuge to everyone. Infinite is her power! Unbounded her mercy! Victory unto the Mother! What to speak of us — we have not found even Sri Ramakrishna doing this. Even he used to accept people after a lot of testing and screening. And what you find here, in the case of the Mother? Astonishing! Amazing! She is giving refuge to all . . . and digesting the sins of all. Mother! Mother! Victory unto the Mother!!'[5]

Her life in the household, first in her father's house and later on at Dakshineswar, Kamarpukur and again at Jayarambati was one of unstinted, continuous and constant service. Single-handed she did all the household work in Jayarambati including taking care of her younger brothers, cooking, gathering fodder for the cows etc. At Dakshineswar she had to serve not only her mother-in-law and her divine consort Sri Ramakrishna but a host of devotees who came to him. Several types of preparations were to be made: some liked heavy bread and thick dal, some *khichuri*, while the delicate stomach of Sri Ramakrishna could take none of these, yet the very nearness of the God-man and service to him gave her great delight. Referring to her later life at Jayarambati (at her village home), Swami Premananda wrote in a letter, 'The exalted Empress has of her own accord appeared as

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[4] सकृदेव प्रपन्नाय तवास्मिति च याचते ॥
अभयं सर्वभूतेभ्यो ददाम्येतद्व्रतं मम ।
आनयैनं हरिश्रेष्ठ दत्तमस्याभयं मया ॥
विभीषणो वा सुग्रीवो यदि वा रावणः स्वयम् ।
Valmiki Ramayana, Yuddhakanda xviii. 33-35

[5] *Vedanta Kesari*: Holy Mother Birth Centenary Number 1954, p. 7.

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the indigent woman. She sweeps floors, scours vessels, husks paddy and even removes the leavings of devotees after food. She has been undergoing great hardships at Jayarambati in order to teach the householders their duties. Infinite patience, unbounded mercy and above all the negation of even the slightest trace of egoism.' [6]

After the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna when she was living at Kamarpukur many were the days that she passed without even a pinch of salt to savour her coarse food, still she did not let anyone know of her condition and even in those days the mendicants who passed through Kamarpukur received their share of food.

Her whole life was a life of renunciation and service, though to all appearances she lived like a householder. Any renouncer could take lessons from her life, for bereft of her formal connections with the household, her life was permeated with spiritual exercises and experiences. Her day began at 3 in the morning and ended at 11 in the night, most of the early hours as well as her spare hours during the rest of the day being spent in meditation and japa. The Mother of the Universe, though she was, she too practised spiritual disciplines in order to set an example to her devotees and this she did all through her life till it was physically impossible for her to do so. To her disciples she would say, 'I have given you what I have to give at the time of initiation. If you want peace immediately, practise the spiritual disciplines prescribed. Otherwise you will achieve it only after the fall of the body.'

As a daughter she did her duties to her parents till the end of their life by attending to their physical needs and doing the household chores. As the eldest sister she discharged her duties towards her brothers, taking care of them when they were yet children and later on when they grew up and were in need of pecuniary help by providing them with money, taking care of their household and by proper advice. She was an illustrious example of a wife : when people were beginning to doubt the historicity of Sita and practicality of her ideal, Holy Mother came on earth to re-live such a life before the eyes of the modern sceptical world.

When in distant Jayarambati rumours spread that her husband had gone mad, she who had waited for his call thought that as a wife her duty and place now was near him, to serve him. So with a heart full of misgivings and trepidation she started for Dakshineswar, but reaching there she found that the rumours were unfounded. She found in him the same loving husband whom she had met at Kamarpukur a few years back. But it was true that he needed her care and help. His frame had been shattered by the long and continuous sadhanas he had undergone and so required to be carefully tended. Then onwards, except for some brief periods of absence at her parental home, she remained near him and served him till he left his mortal coil. That she had no thought other than that of service to Sri Ramakrishna is clear from the way she conducted herself at Dakshineswar. Sri Ramakrishna during the early days of their association at Dakshineswar had asked her, 'Do you want to drag me down into Maya?' Promptly and unhesitatingly had she replied, 'Why should I do that? I have come only to help you in the path of religious life.' A reply which at once reflects the nobility of her character as well as the purity of her being.

Sri Ramakrishna only could aptly gauge the depth of these words and properly appreciate them. Acknowledging her contribution to his own spiritual life, he later on said to his disciples, 'Had she not been so pure, who knows whether I might not have lost my self-control from her inducements?' A greater tribute than this cannot be envisaged. Simple though the statement seems it shows that Holy Mother was a peer to Sri Ramakrishna in self-control and spirituality.

As an ideal Hindu wife her thought current flowed in unison with that of Sri Ramakrishna. She assimilated his ideas perfectly

[6] *Ibid.*

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well, and made them her own and evaluated renunciation as the greatest gift of Sri Ramakrishna to the modern world. Once a devotee wanted to deposit a huge sum in Sri Ramakrishna's name ; but being an embodiment of renunciation he could not entertain the idea of hoarding and asked the devotee never to mention it again. However he said that the devotee can give the amount to Holy Mother if she had no objection to accept it. But when the proposal was put to her, she summarily and peremptorily rejected the offer saying, 'People respect you for your renunciation. If I receive it, I shall spend it on you and it will be as good as your accepting. How then can I accept it?' Sri Ramakrishna, it is said, was immensely pleased with her reply.

She carried out the behests of the Master in the letter and in the spirit. The Master knew human nature well, so he had advised the Mother not to ask even for a pice from anyone. He had also told her to live at Kamarpukur on simple rice and greens grown by herself to avoid seeking help from others. We know how she literally carried out this wish of his.

Again as mother to her several disciples she was incomparable. Never did an earthly mother take care of her children with so much solicitude, so much love. Every one who took shelter at her feet felt it. She was not only mother to the all renouncing sannyasins or sannyasinis, but of all. To those who approached her with an intense desire to give up the world she would say, 'Yes, what is there in this world? You have rightly resolved.' But to others in whom the desire for enjoyment still lingered, she was wont to tell, 'After all is taking the ochre robe the finale of life? The real thing is one should have deep love for God. Why should you give up the world?' Both the types got the answers according to their inmost wish and went satisfied.

We have noticed how obedient she was to the wishes of Sri Ramakrishna but there was a field, of motherly love, where he too could not penetrate. If his advice went against her natural and compassionate motherhood she showed her dislike of his interference either in plain words or by her sullenness. Sri Ramakrishna would then understand her magnanimity and yield to her wishes. Two instances will make the point clear. Once Sri Ramakrishna who happened to notice her liberal distribution of sweets and food which she received at Dakshineswar among the devotees and the children of the neighbourhood and interpreting it as extravagance, said to her in a complaining tone, 'If you spend in this manner, how can you manage?' Mother did not like his remark as it questioned her right to generosity, she remained silent for sometime and then walked away from the place with a grave face. The Master understood the situation at once and sent Ramlal his nephew to pacify her.

Another time it was regarding the feeding of the young devotees that she differed from the Master. Sri Ramakrishna as we know was a relentless teacher when it concerned spirituality. He kept a keen and watchful eye on the progress of his devotees, especially those who were young. He noted their behaviour and corrected them when they went wrong. He even regulated their food according to each one's capacity so that it did not interfere with their meditation. One day he enquired of Baburam (later Swami Premananda) how many *chapatis* he took at night. He said he took five or six. Master asked him why he took so much to which he replied that he took whatever Holy Mother gave him. 'The Master then complainingly said to Holy Mother that she would spoil the spiritual prospect of those young men by over-feeding them.' Her reply brings to light both her motherly love and her divine nature. She said, 'Why do you worry so much because he has eaten two *chapatis* more? I shall look after their welfare. You need not find fault with them for eating.' She was the same Shakti who could grant enjoyment or liberation[7] and therefore she only could assure redemption in such forceful terms.

Above all she represented the true ideal of

[7] सर्वभूता यदा देवी भुक्तिमुक्तिप्रदायिनि ।

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womanhood and as Sister Nivedita puts it, 'she was the last word of Sri Ramakrishna on the ideal of Indian womanhood.' Born and brought up in the village atmosphere she was shy and never appeared before the menfolk without her veil, never made her presence felt anywhere. During the period she lived at Dakshineswar rarely did anyone see her. It is said that the manager of the temple of Dakshineswar had remarked, 'We have heard that she lives here but have never seen her.' So unassuming and so shy was she. But this did not come in the way of her executing the duties to her husband. Early morning she would get up and have her bath in the Ganges even before anyone was awake, but for drying her hair she would wait for the crowd to clear until noon.

Physical labour and discomfort never were impediments to her. A small room was all that formed the kitchen, the drawing room, the store and the bed room at Dakshineswar. A mat was all that formed her bedding. Referring to the room where she spent nearly thirteen years she would say to her nieces that they would never be able to spend a day there. It is beyond one's comprehension how she could accommodate herself in such a small room. Sometimes she shared the room at night with the lady devotees of the Master. All this she cheerfully bore because of the bliss that flowed from the Master at Dakshineswar at that time, and because of the great necessity of taking care of the Master. Like a mother she coaxed him to eat a good quantity of food and kept his ever soaring mind on the normal plane until he finished his food by light talk, and in this way she almost nursed him into health.

Her service and reverence to her mother-in-law and solicitude for her comfort beat all written records of history or legend. She would run to her before Chandra Devi had called out her full name. To the remonstrances of a disciple she said, 'It does not matter much even if I might knock my head against the doorway. She is my Guru and she is also my mother. Ah she is so old, and if I do not go to her in time, she may be put to inconvenience. That is why I run to her in such haste.' This shows what deep love was there behind her service. It was the ideal that she set for the modern world.

An image of forbearance she put up with all the pesterings of her brothers for material wealth, the ravings and insults of the mad sister-in-law, and even physical torments of her neice, Radhu. The latter from her very birth was a source of perpetual worry for the Mother. Yet she suffered all silently and accepted them as an inseparable part of her household wherever she went. In spite of the motley assembly amidst which she lived she carried on her spiritual ministry to the end of her earthly life.

The great dignity of her bearing: People talk of the dignity of labour. One should only reflect on what a lustre she has lent to the dignity of labour itself when she, as narrated before, was doing the most 'insignificant and menial' services at Jayarambati, Kamarpukur, Dakshineswar, Calcutta and other places. Services which the 'cultured' human species of today would always try to avoid with the attitude of stink in the nostrils.

Finally the silent but efficient part she played in the administration of the Ramakrishna Order from its very inception, guided it safely through critical situations which demanded quick decisions and involved enunciation of the future policy and shape of the organisation is something marvellous, the importance and exactitude of which can be visualised only in their proper context.

Swami Vivekananda when after his itineracy in India and meditations and visions on the rock at Kanya Kumari (Cape Comorin), was feeling the urge to go to the West but could not decide, he wrote to Holy Mother for her view and permission. On receiving her permission only all his doubts and vacillations left him, he felt it as a divine command. Again when a disciple raised the question whether it was good for the sadhus of the Ramakrishna Order to work in the Sevashrams and dispensaries or to be occupied with selling books,

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accounting and so forth, she decidedly answered in the affirmative and said, 'What will you do day and night if you are not engaged in work? Can one practise meditation and japa for twenty four hours? You are able to get your food because you are doing some work. The Math will be run on these lines.' Many are the instances in her life which bring to the fore her excellent capacities at administration.

Holy Mother thus combined in herself the human and the divine aspects making her uplifting grace available to one and all. Let us therefore remember her constantly and place ourselves at her mercy and allow her to do as she wills, for did not Sri Sankara, the great Advaitin, hymn to the Divine Mother, 'O Mother, a wicked son may be born but never, never an unkind mother.'[8] Let her give us strength to be her worthy children and enable us to emulate even one of the virtues she had lived and shown us.

[8] कुपुत्रो जायेत क्वचिदपि कुमाता न भवति ।
Devyaparadhakshamapanastotra.

UNIQUENESS OF HOLY MOTHER AMONG THE WORLD SAVIOURS

SWAMI BUDHANANDA

Every saviour accepts his ward on his own terms. Sri Krishna says: give up all other forms of righteousness and take refuge in me. The Buddha says: be light unto yourself. Follow the eightfold path. Do not depend on me. Jesus Christ says: take up your cross and follow me. Even Sri Ramakrishna, who could be called the most lenient of all saviours, in effect says: without renunciation of '*kamini-kanchana*', 'woman and gold', God realization is impossible.

In all the above cases the onus is on the aspirant. The saviour stands firm on his own terms, notwithstanding all his grace and compassion. You will have to do all your grinding in order to become fine. Then you may have a chance of a chance.

But in the case of Holy Mother the case is totally different. She comes to us on our own terms. The onus is on her. Did she not say: if my children smear themselves with dirt, as mother, it is my duty to cleanse them and take them in my arms? As far as is known to us, no other world saviour is on record to have gone that far in the act of saving.

Of all the classical manifestations of the Divine Mother perhaps the Lalitambika is the most benign. Even She can be worshipped only by the indrawn and never by the extrovert.[1] But in the case of Holy Mother there is no such stipulation. It is not through the fulfilment of any condition that her grace is to be attained. It is that unique case in which grace has foregone all-out to attain you, on your own terms. Even wiping out the dirt is none of your concern! You have only to know that you have the Mother.

This would appear to be the special connotation of the term 'Motherhood of God' used particularly in reference to Holy Mother in addition to the classical meaning of the term as expounded in the scriptures. The Divine Mother had been known to us through all ages as *brahmanda-bhandodari*, one who holds in her womb the universe. If the well-known classical connotations alone were to be emphasized, then there would be no need for a new manifestation.

Holy Mother herself said that Sri Ramakrishna had left her in this world to exemplify

[1] अन्तर्मुख समाराध्या बहिर्मुख सुदुर्लभा ।
— Lalitasahasranama.

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Motherhood of God. In all the scriptures on the Divine Mother, one cannot escape the impression that in Her the benign is squared by the terrible, because She is the one Power behind all phenomena. She is *bali-priya, rudhira-priya,* propitiated by blood and sacrifice. Though the Mother of all She is very exacting. Ramprasad who communed with the Divine Mother as intimately as Sri Ramakrishna did, bore testimony to this fact in a famous song.[2]

In his communion with Her, it would appear, Sri Ramakrishna had discovered that for fulfilling the special need of the times (*yuga prayojana*), the sweetness and the benignness of the Divine Mother were as it were seeking to find new manifestations overreaching Her other classic characteristic qualities. In different ages the saving power of the Divine Mother worked through different forms, from which the sanguinary aspect was not excluded. She knew how to wield weapons and kill physically in order to redeem spiritually. Her touch, even if it were through the medium of the sharp point of the glistening spear, was after all, the emancipating touch. Her blood-stained sword was nothing but a symbol of quick reclamation of the erring souls.

Yet in this age when man has become weaker in stuff, Mother seems to have grown softer, for salvaging had become as important a task as saving. No mother can be harsh with the sick child. So there is a change in divine disposition and strategy, and in the art of reclamation of souls. Now there is no need of weapons, for man was to have harnessed plenty of them for self-destruction. The need of the hour is tender motherly love, unsolicited succour, and winkless nursing of the sick souls of mankind. This was the mightiest weapon of Motherhood of God that required to be released in history. Red eyes would no longer chasten us. Limpid tears flowing from the springs of divine heart were needed. So she came, without splendour, like the humblest mother of the most humble among us.

The need of newly exemplifying the Motherhood of God would not be there on the part of the Holy Mother if this aspect was not specially to be emphasized. Therefore we find in the Holy Mother the illusive (*Mahamaya*), terrible (*samharini*) and the sportive (*lila-vinodini*) aspects are completely digested and sublated. We find in her only the over-powering saviour aspect, tinged with utmost sweetness and anxiety of motherhood. And in her the Motherhood of God attains a new perfection of manifestation in that she comes to the jiva on his own terms, without manifesting any of her illusive, sportive or terrifying powers.

The child is busy playing, the mother is busy cooking. Tired with play, the child starts crying. The mother puts down the pan from the oven and rushes to the child. She does not say : I will finish frying these *vadés,* prepare *chutney*, clean the kitchen, take bath, comb my hair and then come and take you on my lap. When the child soils itself the mother does not say : dirty fellow, go and cleanse yourself, and then I shall think of touching you ! She herself cleanses the child and takes it in her arms. The mother accepts the child on its own terms. When the Divine accepts man on his own terms that is motherhood of God, in a special way of which Holy Mother was verily the embodiment.

There is a difference between motherhood and fatherhood of God. When the father is busy at his desk weaving out his arguments for a case in the court, or making an experiment in the laboratory, or knocking his head to get a poem out of his heart, or engaged in preparing his lecture, or discussing party politics, income-tax or fluctuations in the stock exchange, if the child ventures to pop its little nose — finished ! The fellow will have to go from there screaming. May be mother herself will also receive some scolding for allowing the child to disturb his father. But there is a father's time when he himself wants

[2] The first line of the song is :
मन् करो ना सुखेर आशा ।
'O mind do not expect happiness.'

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to relax and does not want to bury himself in files or do any other work. Then the tot *must* come and help the father to be expansive in affection. Even if the child would not like, it must come. It is father's time! With mother, however, things are different. She has no time of her own. It is all child's time.

Man is held between these two 'hoods' of God, fatherhood and motherhood. Both are elemental and necessary dispositions of the same Godhead. For while the father guides, chides, lifts, protects, the mother swings, feeds, nurses, nourishes and saves.

In this age when man seems to have fallen lower than in any other age, if he has to approach a Saviour on his own terms, it would be an almost impossible task. Therefore God's motherhood has sought us out in the form of Holy Mother to make our task easier, nay to make it no task at all, because you get without even asking.

Though intrinsically she was the Rajarajeswari, the supreme dispenser of human destiny, she came to us a simple village woman, always working for and serving the children. All her life, as long as it was physically possible she cooked, dressed vegetables and did all the household chores as a part of her saving spiritual ministration. In her universal protection there was equal refuge for the inspired world-mover, illumined souls, struggling aspirants, fallen souls, simple innocents, worldly crooks, turbulent devotees and oppressive cranks. It was a world complete with all patterns of human souls in the midst of which she stayed and did her divine work all her life. She was neither in the camp of the monks nor in the camp of householders. She belonged to the totality of humanity. Otherwise, how could she be the mother of all? From whichever corner of the world you came, you came only to *your* mother's parlour. And when you left she stood at the edge of the revolving world watching your receding steps with the tearful light of her soul. In the horizon you faced, you saw the Mother's face rising like the sun of reassurance. This was how she placed you on the rhythm of your spiritual evolution without your even knowing anything about it. And therefore she could not see, she had no need of seeing, anyone's faults. One who could lift, transform and transmute you from any distance, she had no need of thrashing and brushing. She only unfolded you from within, unlocked the power that she had kept embedded within you, a spark of her own being. It is this relation of nerves on which she worked and is working on. It is that eternal relation which never snaps, for it is the simple within us. And that is the Motherhood of God which Holy Mother manifested in the fullness of our dire need.

Holy Mother herself not only assured us of her divine motherhood but also said that we are all her children. She vouched for this on different occasions. And for all her children she had a type of same-sightedness, 'samadarsana', the like of which no one has heard of before or after. She said that she could not differentiate between Amzad and Swami Saradananda. The former was a jail-bird, a notorious dacoit, the latter, an illumined soul, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and her own most devoted attendant! When a patriotic monk refused to purchase foreign clothes, she said the foreigners too were her children; she could not be one-sided. Her divine motherhood refused to be contained or circumscribed by geography, history, politics or convention. All separating walls of ignorance she just volatilized by the flaming touch of her motherly love. When she was asked to forbid people of questionable character to come in her presence she firmly refused to accept any such advice. 'Sri Ramakrishna was not born just to eat *rasagollas*[3]!' It was for such depraved souls specially, incarnate divinity had a special responsibility, she said. Children who know to take care of themselves do not so much need the mother's ministration. It is the wayward, the fallen, the sick, the wicked, the sinful, who had a greater claim on Mother's care. Were not they her own children? Then

[3] An Indian sweet made of cheese and soaked in syrup.

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how could she discriminate? And if she discriminated how could the evil ones help getting greater share of her care?

On one occasion even Sri Ramakrishna failed to make impression upon her, for it was an affair concerned with the close preserve of her divine motherhood. As Holy Mother was carrying food for Sri Ramakrishna, a woman suddenly appeared and begged to be allowed to carry the food for the Master. Holy Mother readily complied. The woman kept the plate before Sri Ramakrishna's seat and left. As the woman was known to be of impure character, Sri Ramakrishna found it difficult to partake of the food touched by her. When Holy Mother implored him to somehow take the food that day, Sri Ramakrishna wanted her to promise that she would not any more allow such persons to carry his food but would bring it herself. Laying aside the fan, waving which she was refreshing the Master, with folded hands Holy Mother said that she was unable to make any such promise, for if any one asked of her anything calling upon her as mother, it was beyond her powers not to grant it. But she would try to bring it herself. Sri Ramakrishna at once saw the magnificence and munificence of her divine motherhood and was pleased beyond measure.

In accepting disciples Sri Ramakrishna chose, selected, discriminated, but Holy Mother did not choose, select or discriminate. She placed her saving power at everybody's disposal, however small, low or crude one might be. She initiated disciples into spiritual life on waysides, meadows and railway platforms without caring for any usual formality. But then it is invidious to make any distinction between Sri Ramakrishna and Holy Mother, for both of them said more than once that they were two in one and one in two. Holy Mother specifically said, 'What Sri Ramakrishna is, that I am'. In that case we have to understand that in Holy Mother Sri Ramakrishna's grace attains a new perfection, persuasiveness and pervasiveness. This may be the meaning of Sri Ramakrishna's saying that he was leaving his unfinished work to be fulfilled by Holy Mother. Fatherhood of God is non-different from motherhood except in the mode of expression, which, of course, for us human beings makes a tremendous difference. Which father can handle properly a baby in swaddling clothes and as tenderly as the mother? And spiritually most of us are in swaddling clothes. And therefore the supreme need for the new manifestation of the motherhood of God.

However, either way we have reason's rejoice. Sri Ramakrishna's grace turns vice into virtue.[4] And Holy Mother said: remember that you have a mother, standing behind you and protecting you always. Then what do you have to worry for?

We have, however, to remember to remember the Mother always. Should we not do this much for one who is the perfect guarantee of our spiritual future? Who will be so ungrateful, so hard-hearted as to forget the Mother? And even if we forget, we cannot escape her benign protection and care. For is she not भ्रन्तिरूपेण संस्थिता residing within us even as error?

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[4] कृत्यं करोति कलुषं।

'Even Sannyasins who had no connection with the Ramakrishna Order and were utter strangers to her showed the highest reverence to the Holy Mother. Once a Dandi Sannyasin came to pay his respects to her. Now, Dandi Sannyasins are generally very orthodox. Excepting to their Gurus and men of their own rank, they do not show special respect to any other, much less to a woman. But this man, probably from Western India, had come to Calcutta only to meet the Holy Mother. . . . It also turned out that he had a thorough grasp of the Vedanta and other systems of philosophy. When he was taken to the Mother's presence . . . he, in spite of her request not to do so, prostrated himself before her, recited verses from the Saptasati in praise of her with great devotion, and prayed for her blessings here and hereafter.' —*Life of the Holy Mother.*

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THE PARAMAHAMSA AND THE FAMILY MAN

SWAMI CHIDBHAVANANDA

Two types of Teachers

This world of ours has ever had the privilege of the advent of exponents of religion. It need not be held, as some sects are inclined to do, that the days of their coming are over. In fact they will continue to grace this world whenever a need arises. Various have been the times and places of their appearance. These Teachers may in general be grouped under two types — the family men and the men of renunciation. Quite a number of the Masters born in India have been family men, the foremost among them being Sri Rama and Sri Krishna. The ideals of the house-holder's life remain vividly explained in and through their exemplary career.

The contest for superiority between the conjugal and the celibate ways is a very ancient one. Views and ideas in this respect have always differed. Champions of the one or the other have never been in want. And the controversy has also been interminable. But the Masters themselves have not been participants in this endless controversy. They simply choose to place themselves either in the married life or in the celibate ; and they bring out the best of human life through either. It is evident that if their example is ardently followed one mode of life is as glorious and holy as the other.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa may well be held to be a recent addition to the galaxy of world Teachers. Is he to be classified among the men of renunciation or among the family men is a puzzle confronting us. In tune with the old Masters, he did neither advocate nor condemn either of the two modes of life. On the other hand both of them received equal emphasis in the life of the Paramahamsa. It shall be our endeavour to depict the family man's ideal and way as revealed in and through this unique character.

The Greatness of the Family Life

"Family life sustains all good life" is a popular maxim. Citing this maxim for authority and sanction, people there are who decry monasticism and hug conjugality. Celibacy for life is according to them unnatural and against the plan of creation. But this is a perverted view. The facts of life have to be taken in, in their proper perspective. In order to uphold an institution another need not be pulled down. Each has to be viewed on its merit. The household life has its grandeur and fulfils a mighty cosmic function. It may be compared to an yielding tree. An ideally constituted society provides for four stages in life—the Brahmacharya Ashrama or the period of tutelage, discipline and study ; the Grihastha Ashrama or the household life ; the Vanaprastha Ashrama or the stage of detachment from social obligations ; and the Sannyasa Ashrama or the culmination in spiritual fulfilment. It is the tree of the Grihastha Ashrama that produces the flower of the Brahmacharya Ashrama, the ripening fruit of the Vanaprastha Ashrama and the fully ripe fruit of the Sannyasa Ashrama. Where the tree is not, the production of the other three is impossible. Rightly has Tiruvalluvar put it in his celebrated *Tirukkural* that the householder is the prop to the other three, well stationed in their respective duties.

A corollary now ensues. That self-disciplined Brahmacharis, austere Vanaprasthas, and enlightened Sannyasins are not today found in our society is a clear indication that the household life has deteriorated. If fragrant flowers and luscious fruits are found in abundance it goes without saying that the trees that yield them are healthy and productive. But when flowers and fruits are nowhere to be found, the inference is that the trees have either become barren or that they do not exist. The

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cultivator has to see that the yielding trees are well watered, manured and made increasingly productive. Similarly society advances and prospers in direct proportion to the growth and progress of the household life. Brahmacharis beaming with self-control, Vanaprasthas radiating Self-reverence and Sannyasins shining with Self-knowledge may be found in abundance in a spiritually advanced society. Grihastha Ashrama being the source as well as the succour is given all importance.

Self-mastery in Household Life

Mere matrimony does not constitute a perfect household life. It is from a fully matured flower or fruit that a salutary seed germinates. Healthy plants and stalwart trees do in their turn come out of wholesome seeds. It is the fully disciplined youth of the Brahmacharya Ashrama that is competent to enter matrimony. There is no self-perfection without sense-control. Excellence in celibacy consists in mastery over the senses and the mind. Virtuous living adds more and yet more to divine qualities in a celibate. The moderns hurry into married life without caring to undergo any kind of self-discipline. A plant growing from an immature seed becomes worthless. A youth devoid of the discipline of the Brahmacharya Ashrama is no better than an immature seed. If such an one takes to conjugality he merely adds to the populace. Nothing good is derived from such a lust-ridden conjugality. Such a way of life is no better than an irresponsible animalism. Procreating beyond proportion in a mushroom manner is the evil of today.

Sri Rama is a model for married men. Before his betrothal he was fully ingrained in the austerity of the Brahmacharya Ashrama under the tutelage of the sage Viswamitra. His married life was in fact a prolonged betrothal, at Ayodhya and in the forest. Sri Rama and Sita proved themselves sterling specimens of sense-control before they consummated their wedlock. It was because of the conquest of carnality by this couple that their begetting of the benign twins was possible.

Sri Krishna was seemingly a human; but he was actually a divinity. It is held he owned countless wives. The fact is that all beings are his brides, he being the groom of all. He is the earthly representative of the cosmic principle that God is the Bridegroom of all of His creatures. As such Sri Krishna was nominally a married man; but in fact he was above all conjugality. Nothing on earth or in heaven could bind him.

The Paramahamsa's Matrimony

According to the Hindu concept marriage is not the goal of human life; neither is it to be spurned as an evil. Its function and utility are duly recognized. The ardent in the path of spirituality need not necessarily pass through it, for they have neither the time nor the inclination to pay any heed to it. Among the four stages in the spiritual life, matrimony happens to occupy just the second stage. Life of a holy design neither begins nor ends with it. He alone is a genuinely moral and spiritual man who transcends the urge for conjugality. Nevertheless a rare few there are who, though not in need of a wedded life, give themselves over to it in order to fulfil a benign purpose. Their proving themselves unconscious examples to erring humanity is the first and foremost benefit coming from them. Following in their wake the generality try to pull themselves up.

People there are in whom the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. A compromise has to be made in their case between the two. They want to appease the flesh for some time and at the same time respond to the spirit. This via media course is only possible through matrimony. While the first-rate aspirants overstep it, the mediocre go through it solemnly. Marriage with such is no licence for inordinate sense-indulgence. With much restriction and many regulations they scrupulously keep themselves within bounds. At the same time spiritual practices and disciplines are also rigidly followed by them. The duties of the conjugal life are all religiously gone through only to be outgrown in due course. Ultimately

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the erstwhile mediocre also give themselves over exclusively to the pursuit of the spirit. But the third-rate ones in society are they who are not at all drawn to the service of the spirit. They merely wallow in the sense plane. These are not recognised at the cultural level.

From start to finish Sri Ramakrishna's mind was soaring in a region where matrimony has no place. But his kith and kin had planned to distract and drag down his mind from the supra-mundane, with the powerful weapon of wedlock. Their design was to impose it on him all on a sudden lest he should revolt. Providentially it so happened that the relatives failed in their attempt to get at a suitable bride and Sri Ramakrishna came to their rescue by pitching on the one that was to be his companion. The betrothal did come about, but it left no impress on the mind of the Paramahamsa. From an objective standpoint he was married, though subjectively he was untouched by it. Absorption in the Absolute was the only thing he knew. While an earthly event like wedlock only happens to smother the ordinary, it serves to reveal and pay homage to the Paramahamsa's all-sided personality.

Help-mate

It is quite essential that the married act in unison. Whatever be the chosen ideal, the couple have to give themselves over wholly to it. Be it earthly enjoyment or anything else of that kind, there should be no divided interest in the search after it. An ideal family is that in which the quests for the here and for the hereafter are well balanced. Discord sets in when one of the two seeks the spirit and the other the flesh. A pilgrim is obliged to camp at intervals; but on that score he does not get attached either to the path or to the rest-house. He simply makes use of the road and the halting place. Conjugal life is very much like a pilgrimage to a person pursuing the path to perfection. If the couple understand and adhere to this principle, married life is bound to be sweet and sublime.

Sri Ramakrishna's absorption in the spirit was so intense that it seemed he had completely forgotten he was married. Once in a way his spouse would go to him from her far off native village. And on those occasions he was all care and tender attention to her. Not only did he see to her physical comforts, but he also enlightened her on spiritual matters. The goal in life was vividly presented to her. At the same time the Paramahamsa assured his mate that at whatever level she sought happiness he was ready to mete it out to her. But the spouse on her part proved a match to the Paramahamsa. The thing sought after by her was nothing short of divine bliss. The hearts of the husband and the wife beat to the same tune of spiritual symphony. The Supermundane treasures sought and secured by the husband were all handed over to the wife in the regular household fashion for proper utilisation. The first charge on the matrimonial life was thus literally fulfilled by Sri Ramakrishna.

To the earth-born a certain amount of bodily needs and amenities is indispensable. A decent abode in a congenial atmosphere is the first and foremost among them. Food and clothing come next. It is incumbent on the family man to procure these necessities. Body being ever prone to disease it is prudent on the part of the householder to provide himself with medical aid. Other-worldly though the Paramahamsa was, he was never negligent of his earthly duties to his partner. There is yet another speciality in this supra-mundane man. When he got married his mother could not procure the wonted ornaments for the bride. In despair did the dejected mother console her new daughter-in-law with the fond words: 'Grieve not my darling; Gadadhar will in time decorate you decently'. This guileless statement of the mother lay ingrained in the mind of the dutiful son until he translated it into action. In later days the Paramahamsa was under a rigid vow not to touch gold and silver. All the same he saw to it that his mother's words of promise came true. A dutiful son is expected to go to any length to

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fulfil the promises and cherished desires of his parents. Sri Ramakrishna deemed the discharge of this duty a part of his spiritual discipline. Fulfilment of earthly obligations is not contrary to spiritual soaring. In the midst of his God-intoxication the Paramahamsa meticulously attended to the little earthly needs of his devoted wife.

Seeking of Wealth

Society is nothing but an extensively enlarged family. It is the sum total of all the households. The prosperity of all the families constitutes the prosperity of the community. When homes prosper the whole country prospers. For all this, wealth is indispensable. Without it earthly advance is impossible. An ideal householder is expected to earn both wealth and virtue. No evil accrues to that family man who seeks both money and moral perfection. But many a modern is out to accumulate money at the cost of moral calibre. All is fair to him that fills his purse. Not only is he inordinately money-minded but he is also hazardous in his hunt for it. With the ease and spontaneity of one's changing one's clothes, the modern money-maker changes from one calling to another. He is ever lured by a seemingly more lucrative calling. Constant change of vocation is not conducive to character-building. It brings in disintegration. The one greedy for possession does not understand that no wealth is superior to character. Again there are those who sell themselves away to higher and yet higher prices. Provided the pay is more, they are ever ready to change from one master to another, with the result that there is neither stamp nor calibre in their mental build. It has to be borne in mind that a man in the world has to earn his livelihood, but never at the cost of his character. The family man is bound to learn the art of serving both God and mammon unlike the ascetic.

A householder sins if he does not make money by honest and righteous means. But he sins more, if on the plea that he is preoccupied with earning, fails to serve God in man. It is obligatory on the part of a good citizen to take to a calling useful to society. In pursuing a profession, a person ought to be prompted more by thought of the public weal than by that of private profit. Personal gains should always be subordinated to public prosperity. A project harmful to society should by all means be shunned. A beneficent profession alone should be taken to, and that too, as a service to God in and through man. A model member of society is he who is not obsessed with the thought of remuneration. Providence unfailingly provides all his needs to him who loses himself in the service of all. The self-seeking individualist on the other hand may seem to prosper in the beginning, but ultimately he loses both mammon and God. The life of Sri Ramakrishna as a family man serves as a fine example of a devoted servant of God and man. He accepted the post of a priest in a temple. He did not seek it, but being requested to do so he agreed to discharge that holy duty which was in tune with his temperament. Nevertheless no thought of any pecuniary remuneration did ever creep into his mind. The temple management at Dakshineswar no doubt paid him a paltry fee of seven rupees a month for the holy office he held; but salary was no concern of his. He even refused to sign the acquittance. As suggested by him the management used to place his so called monthly salary in a niche in his living room. His associates were told by him to draw coins from that niche whenever a need arose. Thus money came and went without his paying any heed to it.

Offerings in cash and kind would now and then come to Sri Ramakrishna, but he was very discriminating in accepting them. Gifts from questionable quarters were on no account accepted; politely were they declined. Bare necessities alone were received from devotees and people of clean endeavour, only to be utilised in the service of those who came to him. The tendency to lay aside something for the morrow never crossed his mind. Simple living was his rule. In the eyes of the worldly his parsimony verged on poverty; but in the

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mental make the Paramahamsa was ever in affluence. His attitude towards possession has a message to the world. Plenty or poverty is in the attitude of the mind. With or without material possessions the rich in mind alone are really rich. Though rolling in wealth, the niggardly are ever poor. The attitude towards wealth, the way in which it is acquired, the way in which it is disbursed, in regard to these Sri Ramakrishna's way is an object-lesson. In monetary matters man has to function very much like a bridge — is the exhortation of the Paramahamsa. Water comes in from one side and gets out on the other side of the bridge. If the flow be obstructed by the bridge, it runs the risk of being washed away. In abundance as well as in scarcity let money be passing through the hands of a family man and let him serve as a bridge. Thereby he builds his character which is the only covetable property.

Mutual Adoration

The relationship between the husband and the wife is the best instrument to fathom the merit of family life. Married life undergoes transformation in direct proportion to the attitude that one of the partners develops towards the other. A base attitude makes home life vulgar and demoniac. A sublime attitude on the other hand makes it a haven of peace and bliss. Between these two extremes, whatever domestic state a man finds himself in, is the result of the relationship he has developed with his spouse. Chastity is usually held to be the noblest element in a woman. The Hindu society sanctions a man's marrying more than once ; but it never countenances the idea of even a child widow remarrying. Woman being the custodian of the racial purity, this stringent measure has been imposed upon her ; but like everything else this custom has here and there developed an inhuman aspect. In this age Sri Ramakrishna has presented a new standard of chastity both to man and woman. And there is the least possibility of evil repercussion in this neo-chastity embodied in this Master. According to the existing custom any lapse on the part of a man is not severely viewed, as is done in the case of a woman. Even a fallen husband has to be looked upon as a demi-god by his wife, and she is bound to be faithful to him. But the husband often puts on a patronising attitude towards his partner. Sri Ramakrishna arrests this arrogance on the part of man. Firstly he warns him not to look upon the wife as a mere object of enjoyment. Marriage is a sacred act and not a sanction for sensuality. Secondly he has to hold her not as a dependent. She is as much his protectress as he is her protector. The life of the one is incomplete without the help and co-operation of the other. In the economy of nature, woman has as much a part to play as man. The greatest service that man can do to woman consists in his giving her magnanimously the individuality that is hers. In denying it to her or depriving her of it he depraves himself and causes her to degenerate. But in allotting her, her legitimate share of responsibility and position in life, the couple act like folded hands while praying to the Almighty. Homage to God with one hand raised to the exclusion of the other is incomplete and ludicrous. And no hand is superior to the other while in the act of folding and praying. This is exactly the relationship between the spouses. That to the wife the husband is a deity, is the old order. Equally so, that to the husband the wife is a deity is the additional and new order presented to us by the Paramahamsa. This precept of his has come to us not through his preaching, but out and out through his practice. By holding each other a deity, the married ones raise themselves to a divine level. A sublimation higher than this cannot be conceived of in the matrimonial life. To the extent this ideal is received and put to practice, the Grihastha Ashrama rises in purity and grandeur of purpose.

Hospitality

He is no genuine householder who chooses to live exclusively for himself and his family. He who holds that his espoused career is for

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the good of others and acts up to it is the model family man. Being of help and service to others is the first mark of a good family man. Help-seeking strangers as well as dependents have all to be kindly attended to and served according to one's means. But this great ideal is rapidly disappearing today from this proverbial land of hospitality. Selfishness is on the increase. The vow of attending to the welfare of others is more violated than practised. People are wantonly becoming callous to domains beyond the domestic. 'Me and my kith and kin' is the order of the day. This state of affairs is today begetting grave social problems.

The number of the spiritually athirst that sought the company of Sri Ramakrishna was increasing with the march of time. And those who chose to go to him were sumptuously fed, the feast consisting of soul-elevating ideas.

It did not however end with ambrosial dissertation only. The bodily needs were attended to with equal care and kindness. The approach to the heart, it is said, proves very effective when made through the stomach. The divinity-saturated Ramakrishna was not unmindful of this fact. Whoever went to him was served with food for the body as well. Hospitality of this kind necessarily meant extra physical labour to Sri Sarada Devi. But never did she grudge it. It was a delight for her to cook and feed the devotees. Her mind being set in God and her body in the service of His children, she was busy from day to day. Even after the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna this holy task of hers continued as a cherished privilege upto her last days. The most inspiring part of it is that this couple never worried themselves about the wherewithal. With the available resources of the day, hospitality was heartily extended. The morrow brought its requirements providentially. The more the water is drawn out from a well, the more fresh water springs in. Similarly the more a person doles out heartily the more supply comes to him from where nobody knows. This fact remains abundantly proved in the hospitality practised by Sri Ramakrishna and his spouse.

Progeny

Family life is held to be incomplete without progeny. There is some truth in this notion. The traditional belief is that the son saves the father from damnation in hell. Put in other words this means that the family man who fails to beget commits a heinous sin. But this conception evidently gained ground in those golden days when the enlightened usually chose the path of renunciation in preference to the path of the family man. It was made incumbent on them in those days to marry and beget one or two before taking to the path of renunciation. But the position is reversed now. The urge in man to get married is today very intense. And procreation takes place beyond proportion. Self-restraint is a thing unknown to the moderns. Sri Ramakrishna ushered himself in this setting in order to set a different example to erring humanity. 'O man, your marriage does not mean that you should be lost in lewdness' was his note of warning. And in tune with his teaching both he and his spouse were embodiments of sense-control. Neither of them ever dreamt of any progeny. They proved themselves unconscious teachers to the modern lust-ridden world. On the ground that they were progenyless, nobody would dare to say that their family life was barren. Rather it is the over-producing that makes life barren and feeble. The concept, therefore, in regard to progeny has to change with the example of this couple.

Though the Paramahamsa and his partner gave no thought to procreating they have not been issueless all the same. Disciples according to the Hindu concept are on a par with sons and daughters. While the latter are flesh-born, the former are mind-born. And in man mind occupies a position superior to that of the body. As such, disciples are in a way superior to sons. The Paramahamsa sought and gathered disciples worthy of him. His apostles such as the Swami Vivekananda and

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the Swami Brahmananda may be said to be his true spiritual children. The Master prayed and pined for the possession of pure souls such as they. The physical frames of the divine parents have disintegrated; but the power of their prayer persists. The response to that prayer started when they were yet in their mortal coil, but it did not stop with their physical disappearance. Sons and daughters capable of receiving their message came to them when they were living, they are coming today and they will continue to come in the future as well. The spiritual family set in by them continues to increase in number and volume, reminding us powerfully of the sublime Upanishadic statement:

सोऽकामयत। बहु स्यां प्रजायेयेति। स तपोऽतप्यत। स तपस्तप्त्वा। इदꣳ सर्वमसृजत।

'He, the Atman, desired: May I become many; let Me procreate Myself. He brooded over Himself. Having brooded, He projected all this—whatever there is here.'

Language, clime and custom are no barrier to the growth of this family. It is imperceptibly extending to the corners of the world. It is too early to predict how big this family is going to be. Its enormity is hidden in the womb of time. The credit of having created a world-wide spiritual family is theirs. The householder acquires merit by proper procreation. And in the spiritual realm this merit is due in abundance to this very productive divine couple. For the good of the world may their family increase.

LETTERS OF SWAMI SARADANANDA

(Here below are given some letters of Swami Saradananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, the first General Secretary of the Ramakrishna Order, a devout attendant of Holy Mother and the writer of the life of the Master, the *Lilaprasanga*, in Bengali. The letters will be found to contain practical suggestions and instructions regarding such matters as service, building up of the nation, building up of one's character, the effects of *karma* etc., all of which are greatly needed today.—*Ed.*)

Sri Sri Ramakrishna Sharanam

Calcutta,
4-5-25

Received your letter of 2nd May. That is natural for youth, more so if bad company is added to it. In that case it becomes, almost impossible to put a barrier of self-control. Once the bad habits are strong, it takes much pain and many years to get rid of them. So from now onwards practise daily, keeping company with holy men, having good thoughts, praying with great yearning to Sri Sri Thakur and reading good books. If you practise these with whole heart for a year or two, you will be able to see the result. Those who will not have any result even by this, they should marry and lead a good life. Accept my blessings.

Yours etc.

Sasi Niketan, Puri,
26-6-25

Happy to receive your letter dated 22nd June. The mind will be calm if you call on Sri Sri Thakur daily. So never forget to do that. Of course during examination you should keep your attention to have success in it as far as possible. I bless that you should pass well in the examination. Write to me again after your examination. Most probably I shall be here at that time also for I was ill for about a month previously and I feel mostly well after coming here. I shall tell you what you should do then when you write after your examination.

Do not be anxious to serve the people from now onwards. Sri Sri Thakur makes him do service to the people, who can give the whole of his mind to His lotus feet. Otherwise with

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big planning none can do it properly. Therefore keep your attention first of all on giving Him your all. Accept my blessings always. Belong fully to God and give away all your personal interests fully at His feet. The only purpose of life is to have His direct vision — try to conceive this. The mind will then never again be shaken through the glamour of name, fame and power ; then only the mind will not fall into the clutches of lust and gold. What more to write . . . Become His out and out.

Yours etc.

Calcutta,
3-6-26

Received in time your letter of the 21st May. I could not answer as I was not well and also for other reasons. My health is better than before. Hope through the grace of the Lord your health is all right by now . . . Accept my blessings always and convey to all others there.

The detailed answer to your questions in this small letter is impossible ; so I am writing in brief. (1) As Sri Sri Thakur practised all types of sadhana so it can be inferred that he practised a little of *Hathayoga* also. By the falling of blood from the roots of the teeth while doing the puja as recorded in the Lila-prasanga and by what one sadhu said at that time about that, this aforesaid inference becomes strong. But he never asked us personally to practise *Hathayoga*. Even he did not give us any special instruction to do pranayama. About giving up *Hathayoga* it may be said that when he saw that by this God cannot be realized, only the body becomes strong and the body-consciousness increases, he gave it up.

(2) I have heard from Swamiji that he practised a little pranayama while at home. But he was especially a Rajayogi and an adept in meditation. While sitting for meditation his breath would automatically stop and there would be no consciousness of the body. I know that he did not make any special practice of *Hathayoga*. And he saw in many cases that unless a proper instructor is found, pranayama etc., specially practised, cause harm. That is why he has advised others the path of devotion conjoined with knowledge. Of course, he instructed many of his disciples to do a little of the practice of purification of the nadis i.e. to breathe in slowly then breathe out slowly five or seven times. And in the English book named Raja Yoga he has explained many things about pranayama and has told of their benefits but at the end he has asked not to practise it without a proper instructor. Really speaking, his opinion was identical with Thakur's i.e. as God cannot be realized by practising *hathayoga*, pranayama etc., it is not necessary to do them. Japa, meditation, study of scriptures, discrimination between the real and the unreal, all these he preached with great stress.

(3) Jnana, Karma, Bhakti, and Yoga are what Swamiji has taught, there the meaning of yoga is Raja-Yoga i.e. to try for Dhyana-samadhi etc.

(4) If a student does a little pranayama — say does one or two pranayama before sitting for japa — that can be allowed. That will do him no harm.

(5) Mission does not say anything for or against taking part in politics. For Thakur did not ask us to do anything regarding that. And Swamiji asked the Mission to be away from that endeavour. That is why the Mission up till now is concerned with religion and service to the people.

(6) As all things are changeable so the subjugated state of India also will change some day and political independence will come. Mission does not know, nor tries to know after how many days it will come. Mission tries that people in general should become stronger in the strength of spirituality and character and become real men. After becoming men of character and religious and strong they will find out in which way they are to manage their society and administration of the country.

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(7) Mission has started the vidyapitha etc. with the idea of seeing that the boys and girls learn from their student life itself to be endowed with character and to build their life with high ideals. At the end I want to say that as much as you progress yourself in spiritual practice and become thoughtful so much will you be able to solve these problems automatically. So keep your attention on that.

Your well-wisher,
SRI SARADANANDA.

Calcutta,
27-11-21

Received your letter. By trying to consult the readings of the horoscope always people lose faith in their own capacity and become weak-minded. Readings of the horoscope are made with the situations of the planets and stars but by those situations nobody can say how far a man's capacity will be manifested. For that reason, with self-effort the readings of the horoscope are changed this way or that.

Practice and detachment are necessary to bring one-pointedness in the naturally restless and out-going mind. It seems to me that you could not call on Thakur regularly as I asked you to do everyday. Sitting lonely take the name of God morning and evening and think about the transitoriness of all things of the world. Then alone the mind will gradually become one-pointed. Of course complete one-pointedness will come after many years of such practice. Accept my blessings.

Yours etc.

INDIA'S CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATION—I

V. N. SHARMA

Methods of Study—Introduction

We find in all ages that instruction aimed in all branches of study was at profound rather than at swift and alert thought. Ancients never cared for lucid exposition but presented to the pupil a kernel of truth in a hard shell. The student must crack that unassisted with his own strong teeth if he would enjoy the kernel. So we find less and less accumulation of facts and more and more inspiration to discover a truth drawing out all innate forces of his faculty. He has to search constantly what is beyond — unlike the methods in the West that aim at the prosperity of this world — the Visible and the Manifested and how he could get at that and merge himself into that Unmanifested.

There is a significant allusion in an ancient text to the state of a student in his search for knowledge and understanding. When he sleeps without the least regard for his knowledge, this state of his understanding is said to be darkness and ignorance (*Kali*). When he tries to shake off his slumber, it is the beginning of enlightenment, a state passing from the stage of animal nature to the stage of childhood (*Dwapara*). When he wakes up it is the state of preparation for his knowledge, the stage from childhood to youth (*Treta*). But it is not the end of his search. Further he has to transcend. 'But to secure *Krita* (Perfection and fullness), the stage of real manhood (*Manushyatva*) he must engage himself in securing the knowledge not only of this world but of Brahman Himself' (*Aitareya Brahmana,* VII. 15). The same text in order to bring home this thought more clearly, tells us that in the state of darkness (*Kali*) a student is surrounded with *Tamasic* forces (Inertia). In *Dwapara* stage he moves slowly, shackling the forces of the inertia and in the state of *Treta* he stands up ready to take up his work. And finally in the *Krita*, he is im-

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patient of his present position; he must go further to understand the true nature of all things. He wanders from one place to another, visiting this teacher and that teacher, serving all men of knowledge he happens to meet, in his search to quench his thirst, and satisfy his hunger for wisdom. The light in him is kindled — he must now have the capacity to burn it aright in all situations of his life in this world.

In this connection we could reflect on the methods employed by Lord Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita* — which represent the ancient way of imparting knowledge higher and lower, both in the Vedic as well as in the later times by the teachers of India to such seekers of wisdom. It is taken for granted that in the search for knowledge a student has to pass through many conflicts, inner and outer, to bring down his organism and to give an outlet for the flow of harmony and peace in each and every part of it. At times, he has to become a prey to a conflict of thoughts, duties and opinions. It is taken for granted that a state like this is a natural thing to any one who aspires to come 'From this world to Their World', from the world of demons and dark forces to the land of gods and divine forces. Many stories, that we find in the Epics and in the Puranas in particular, give us a clue to this mystery: the battle between demons and gods. This battle we find raging in Arjuna, who approaches Lord Krishna, his companion and teacher, for remedy. Lord Krishna gives us some idea of this ancient method in his teachings. As a teacher he watches his student every moment of his contact: he energises him and pulls him up from the slough of despondency and confusion, a state which one must pass through if he has a right desire to achieve success in his search. 'Cast off this faint-heartedness', 'Be thyself — a hero and man of action'. He draws his pupil away from the pursuit of passing pleasures to a disinterested discharge of his *Dharma* irrespective of the results. Light and illumination the teacher grants him, gives him encouragement in spite of the teacher's strict methods. He casts a smile now; and now arouses confidence in him and makes him feel, even though he has to walk alone in his search, that he is not alone, that he has friends and others nearby to console him and comfort him in his great pilgrimage to find his true and natural place through wisdom, knowledge and understanding.

The teacher tells him that by doubt he cannot show any progress in his search, and this doubt, this delusion is caused only by unwisdom and this must be destroyed with that ancient weapon of weapons, one-pointed mind (*Ekagrata*). (*Bhagavad Gita,* 18. 72). The student is still in his delusion; inspiration does not help him, persuasion does not help him. However the teacher has not lost his faith in the divinity of the pupil. He pursues some other methods, which he must use in order to awaken that dynamic force of his natural organism to unveil the Lord who is in him. He knows that when this is done, then he could open the portals of his consciousness for ever. He shows His Own Nature, (*Bh. Gita,* Ch. XI), that eternal and immortal form of His true existence (*Viswarupa Darsana*). When one knows this highest form of his preceptor he could not miss the full significance of things imperfectly known or comprehended. Example of the teacher alone could help him; not mere outer ways. He could then draw the student right to him, to his heart. Devotion, faith, confidence and reverence then alone would arise in the pupil. 'He is dear to me who does my work, having my ideal always in mind and consequently at peace with all beings'. (*Gita* XI, 55). He further inspires him, 'Do realise and know that which can be attained through inquiries (*Pariprasna*), through meditation and worship. Then alone the noble ones who have known of the most Highest One impart that to you' (*Bhagavad Gita*). The pupil knows that the knowledge of That which all seek in different ways and through different paths is only given to him who is calm and tranquil in spirit (*Svetaranya Up.* VI. 2). The moment he realises himself in this way all other things

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would lose their passing form and attach themselves as his servants for his action and for his service. The example of the teacher in other words is the highest thing necessary before his outer methods of teaching.

'Know it after paying homage to the teacher, questioning him when doubts cross thy mind, and doing the service he would have thee do'. The sympathy of the teacher, his guidance, is always there in the inner struggle passing in the student. In every stage of his path, the teacher is there to answer the ancient call, 'I am thy pupil, seeking refuge in thy corner. Order me as to which is the best course for me to follow'. Yes, the teacher is there to answer this call making him understand that the path he has chosen is right even though hard. 'Mind is most difficult to restrain; but by slow and steady effort and by detachment from sense objects it is brought gradually under control' (*Gita,* 6. 35). In other words the instrument of the teacher in this connection is *antahkarana* (inner apparatus of the mind) of his pupil and this he uses every day either through the process of meditation or through other spheres of his contact with the pupil. Thus a new state is created — a state of perfect harmony and equilibrium in the mind of the student. Without this perfection all his study and all his learning, the ancient teachers consider, is of no use.

The Yogic Discipline plays a great part to bring about this harmony and mental purification (*citta suddhi*). The moment the pupil achieves this, all forces round him become friends and instruments to express himself and enable his intellect and intuition (*buddhi*) to play their own part to establish once again in him peace within and without and make him in other words to know himself. Every thing becomes now smooth and harmonious. All faculties are now let loose and through different traditional methods of instruction, partly from the preceptor and partly from his own intuition, observations and inference, the pupil chooses his own path with full discrimination (*Viveka*) and understanding, plans his own methods, as he is now free from disturbances either from within or without. (Arabinda Ghose : *National Education,* pp. 35-38).

Even in this state of perfection, the teacher does not leave him ; he is there in other forms to know whether his pupil has fully comprehended his goal, his light and whether all his struggles have been finally cleared (*Bhagavad Gita* 18. 72). This the third eye (*Manonetra*) of the pupil, the ancient teachers developed. Thus they inaugurated their methods of instruction in the battle field of his path, not through fear, punishment, and suffering but through happiness and cheerfulness. 'Get hold of the knowledge of the Self and do your study (*Brahma Vidya*) then you will find peace and serenity in all your activities (*Karmas*). This method alone would remove all obstruction (*mritya*) imposed by non-knowledge (*avidya*) on your path' (*Vishnu* 6. 12). Further the ancient teachers proclaim 'Let all your movements, inner and outer, be the movements of consecration to the Divine Self. Let all your thoughts and feelings be united together and ever flow towards that Divine Life'. 'Inquire of those things which are hidden even from the Gods', (*Rig Veda* I. 164. 39) through study, through understanding, through Life and through realisation.

Life in the school. Beginning of the term

Under the ancient system of education the school term began in the rainy season (*Rig Veda* VIII. 103. 9) on the full moon day of *Sravana* (August-September) or in some places in the cold season when the heat was less intense. But the rainy season was preferred by all, as all nature smiled with the pulsation of a fresh life and is considered best time to begin the Vedic chants (*Usana* III. 57). There is a special ceremony known as *Usarga* or *Upakarma* on the opening day (*Usana* III. 57). We see this custom not only in the Vedic and Post Vedic times but also in the later times and the Buddhist schools have also followed the ancient tradition (*I-Tsing* Ch. I; *Hiouen Chwang* I. 145). The school term lasts for six and half months or in some cases

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five and half months (*Samkhyayana* IV. 6. 7 ; *Gautama* XVI. 1 ; *Vasista* X. 2. 5 ; *Usana* III. 56).

The *Upakarma* ceremony is an impressive one and many descriptions of this ritual we find in the Sutra literature ; and the Upanishads touch on it often in discourses. The ceremony lasts for three days. It is a student's day in one sense, as all the rites and sacraments connected with the ceremony are directed and performed by the pupils themselves. The teachers and other elders of the community watch the ceremony and bless the celebrants in the end with the traditional invocations to the Lords of Wisdom. There is a great ritual round the domestic fires (*Agnihotra*) of the teacher. The student makes oblations of the flour of fried barley and of grains mixed with curds and ghee to the fire chanting the whole Veda verse by verse. 'This ceremony is performed by all who are desirous of acquiring vigour, reverence and also soundness of study, and also for the success of all his duties he undertakes under his preceptor.' (*Samkhyayana Gr. Sutra* 14).

The daily programme in the school is also very impressive. Tagore gives a picture of this ancient usage in his *Chitra* 'On the top of the Ashrama (Hermitage) trees a new dawn awakens. The hermit boys fresh bathed, with glittering hairs, pure and clean, radiant like dew in the morning light, gather round the teacher Gautama under the shadow of the ancient Vata (Banyan) tree. Amidst the song of birds, the humming of bees and the sounds of running water rise the harmonious words of Sama song chanted in unison by youthful voices' (R. N. Tagore in the *Chitra* 1894).

Both the Vedic Texts and the Epics touch this immortal scene of students in many places, a scene even today we could see in many National Institutions in different parts of India.

As we have seen elsewhere the hours of study are after the morning devotions and after late evening (*Yajnavalkya* I. ii. 17-18). Forenoons after study are set apart for the begging of food. Afternoons are spent for rest after meals, for walks and wanderings on business or pleasure, games, domestic services of the household of the teacher, and so forth.

The sunset has a special significance in the life of the students and many Indian poets have preserved for us many pictures of ancient schools of this time of the day. We take liberty once again to quote a passage from Tagore : 'In the shadow of the forest the evening sun had set on the banks of the Saraswati. The children of the hermits have come back from distant fields to the silent forest home. They have brought back the tired cattle with peaceful eyes to their forest shelter'. We have also some pictures of the evening life in the school by Tagore. He tells us : 'After finishing their evening ablutions they have gathered round Guru Gautama in the cottage yard lighted by the sacrificial fire. In the sky and in the infinite space beyond, peace sits wrapped in meditation ; the stars have gathered round in eager expectation like silent disciples. The still forest quivers when Maharshi Gautama speaks "Children, hearken I tell you of Brahma Vidya — Divine Wisdom".' (Tagore : *Chitra*).

The goal of mankind is knowledge. . . . Now this knowledge, again, is inherent in man. No knowledge comes from outside ; it is all inside. . . . All knowledge that the world has ever received comes from the mind ; the infinite library of the universe is in your own mind. The external world is simply the suggestion, the occasion, which sets you to study your own mind. The falling of an apple gave the suggestion to Newton, and he studied his own mind. He rearranged all the previous links of thought in his mind and discovered a new link among them, which we call the law of gravitation. . . . All knowledge therefore, secular or spiritual, is in the human mind.

— SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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SANKARA AND HIS PHILOSOPHY

P. NAGARAJA RAO

Sankara was the foremost philosopher of India. If philosophy is the intellectual interpretation of Reality, then Sankara has shown clearly to the world, the unassailable, consistent system of Advaita Vedanta embodied in the Upanishads, interpreted and harmonised by the Brahmasutras and popularly expounded by the Gita. He has laid bare the outlines of the imposing system behind the triple Vedantic classics. Sankara relies on three sources for the exposition of his system. He first takes on trust the existence and value of the non-dual spirit on the authority of the Sruti. He explains the content of the Sruti in the light of human reasoning and refutes possible objections to it. He lastly confirms the existence of the Spirit from his spiritual experience. This is the logical order, but the real order is, he speaks from the fullness of his experience. In the *Sutra-bhashya* Sankara makes a single oblique reference to his spiritual experience and that gives us the insight into the primacy of spiritual experience. He writes, 'How can any one deny the heartfelt experience of another as possessing Brahman knowledge while being in a body'. In short Sankara bases his philosophy on *Sruti, Yukti* and *anubhava.*

His spiritual experience confirms his faith in the Sruti. His is not a blind faith or a blank acceptance. He does not swallow the Sruti as a pill. His is the attitude of critical acceptance of the Sruti. His is an attitude of trust tempered by criticism.

Before we pass on to his estimate of the function of reason which he uses to explain the Sruti, let us know his view of the Sruti. The Sruti or the Vedas, to Sankara is all not of one degree of importance. He holds that there is a great divide between the two parts of the Vedas, the ritual section, i.e. *karma-kanda* and the *jnanakanda*, i.e. the section relating to Brahman and spiritual realisation. One deals about *Dharma* delivering injunctions and prohibitions and awarding heaven and hell as the rewards for those who obey the behests. It is at last a kind of super-natural pragmatism which makes karma the sovereign power in the world.

Sankara feels that this section does not describe the ultimate truth of the Vedas. They deal only about the secondary categories, Dharma. Karma cannot give us *moksa* even if it is infinitely pursued. According to Sankara the Upanishads which represent the nature of Brahman convey the ultimate message. To realise the Brahman, which is already real and existent, is the goal of man. The individual soul due to a fundamental ignorance has the feeling that the pluralistic world of souls and objects is real. It is this deep-rooted, firm, but false conviction that makes men hate one another, make war, cry down and destroy others. This separatist illusion (*dvaita bhranti*) is to be overcome for the realisation of Brahman. This is not to be had as the result of action, but through *jnana.* We need the spiritual vision of the oneness. It is not the product of any activity (*utpadya*), nor is it a case of transformation (*samskarya*), nor is it a place to be reached (*apya*). It is ever there. It is the natural condition of the soul. Hence Sankara stands for *jnana* as the antidote for ignorance. Bondage is due to *ajnana,* release is due to its opposite *jnana.* Sankara also rejects the compromise solution i.e. of *samuchaya vada,* the combination of *jnana, karma* and *bhakti.* In his assertion of *jnana* as the sovereign method for spiritual realisation, he is not slow to realise the degree of worth in *karma* and *bhakti.* He urges that *karma,* when done selflessly as dedication to the Lord secures *sattvasuddhi.* It cleanses the mind which is a necessary step for the removal of ajnana, though not a direct and immediate step. Genuine *bhakti* makes us realise

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the finite failings in us. Sankara, very clearly demarcates the two sections of the Vedas and asserts the difference in their values and places the real significance of the Sruti in Brahman realisation. When Sankara asserts that the Upanishads embody the final and true gospel of the Vedas, he does not merely rely on all passages in the Upanishads as stating the truth. Authority is not claimed for all the statements of the Upanishads, only the purportful scriptures lay bare the meaning. To determine the meaning of the Upanishadic passages there are the six determinate marks of purport, and among those reason (*upapatti*) appears to be only one of the marks of the purport, in reality its functioning is important in the determination of all other marks of purport also. Further applying the scheme of six *tatparya lingas,* Sankara establishes 'the non-difference of the individual soul to Brahman, the unreality of the world and the absolute reality of the non-dual spirit' as the prime purport and real message of the Vedas. The method followed by him is simple but appears subtle. He classifies the Upanishadic passages into two categories, those passages that embody the ultimate truths, *tattva-vedaka Srutis* and *atattva-vedaka Srutis* i.e. those that speak of the apparent reality. Sankara argues that the function of the Sruti is not to explain things that are already disclosed to us through perception or inference. The Upanishads seek to tell us something that we do not know and cannot know through any other instrument than the Vedas. The *abheda vakyas* i.e. the identity passages disclose the *novel truth* of the unity of existence and the non-difference of the individual soul to Brahman which is not disclosed by the *bheda* Srutis. The *bheda* Srutis merely elaborate the phenomenal world that is superimposed on Brahman. They confirm what we know through experience and other sources of knowledge. The scriptures are authoritative only in respect of that truth which cannot be had through any other sources. The law of novelty is insisted on ('*aprapte sastram pramanam*'), scripture is authoritative in respect of those truths that cannot be had from any other source. Relying on this principle Sankara argues that the supreme purport of the Upanishads is the identity of the individual soul with Brahman. Those *bheda* Srutis that speak of difference between the soul and Brahman are not the prime purport. They are stated and refuted. The reason for rejecting the *bheda* Srutis, is they do not give us any novel idea which we cannot have through other sources. *Apurvata* (novelty) is the criterion for the rejection of those scriptures. Hence, we find that the philosophical categories of Advaita Vedanta flatly contradict the deliverances of common sense. To the utter irritation of the realists Sankara asserts that the universe of men and things are unreal, *because* they are seen and perceived, *because* they are particular and finite and *because,* they are non-sentient. The truths of Advaita have to be learnt from the Sruti primarily, and not from mere intellection. They have to be explained secondarily with the help of logic and argumentation. In the plenary sense they have to be experienced. Spiritual experience carries with it self-certifying validity. The sastras in the ultimate analysis are only *jnapakas* and not *karakas.* From this we gather that Advaita is not a facile acceptance of Sruti : Advaita is based on examined Sruti.

If Sankara is not a blind literalist, nor is he an arrogant free thinker who built his philosophy on the basis of pure reason and human logic. This is not to say that he was illogical or inconsistent. If he was critical of the Vedas, he also was equally critical of reason and its functionings. He did not believe in logic for its own sake. He knew that human reason is at best a double edged instrument. It cuts both the ways. It is in the words of our national poet 'all blade and no handle'. It cannot function in a vacuum. It cannot supply ends. It can work out the ends it is supplied, be they good or ignoble. Hence it is described by Hume as the slave of passions. In his commentary on a significant *sutra* Sankara prescribes the limits of reason. Sankara writes,

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'mere reasoning cannot be depended upon in matters which must be understood in the light of revelation. Reasoning rests on individual opinion. The arguments of some clever men are refuted by others. On account of the diversity of men's opinions it is impossible to accept mere reasoning as a sure guide. Even men of outstanding intellectual eminence such as Kapila, Kanada and others are seen to contradict one another. As against this if it be contended, that all reasoning is not unsound, even this assumption is based on reasoning. Further, it is possible for rationalists to argue, that if all reasoning is baseless, then the whole cause of our practical life will come to an end.'

Sankara concludes that all reasoning as such is not useless. That reasoning which is not opposed to and is in accord with the prime purport of the Sruti is valid. Vague reason is inconclusive. It can prove or disprove anything. Reason can argue, it cannot discover or demonstrate. Though Sankara does not accept the exclusive and sole deliverances of reasoning as ultimate truths, he was not slow to know the power of reason and its function in human development. The Upanishads themselves declare that Vedanta is not for

'one that is intellectually indolent. It requires a razor like mind to comprehend the truths of Vedanta. *Vichara, jijnasa, manana* are not possible without the functioning of the intellect.'

Sankara knew through his astute intellect that Reason has a limited role. On occasions he says that Advaita Vedanta can be stated in terms of rational philosophy. It is not a merely scriptural revelation. This he does in his commentary on the *Gaudapāda karikās*. Throughout the bhashya, in many places Sankara speaks of the glory of reasoning. He writes that a hundred scriptural statements cannot turn blue into red or make fire cold. He counsels us to argue, but not to argue perversely (*Tarkyatām, mā Kutarkyatām*). Sankara the giant intellect that he was has refuted the Logicians, the Sankhyas, the Buddhists and the Mimāmsakas in his commentary on the *tarka-pada* with the help of logic. Any one who reads the commentary of Sankara on the first two padas of the 2nd chapter will see how it regales the mind of the most astute metaphysicians and at times even baffles the expert. Hence the bhashya is described at once as lucid and deep (*prasanna gambhiram*). Sankara's conception of reason holds the balance. He is not subjugated by reason though he is fascinated by it. Reason shakes men, but the mere reasoning power of argument does not shatter Sankara. He is neither an abject flatterer of reason, nor is he its determined enemy. He uses it in the measure one should without violation to the spiritual advancement of man.

Sankara puts his final faith in the self-validating spiritual experience (*aparokshānubhuti*). Spiritual realisation is the authentic pramana. Spiritual experience is total and is not fractional. It is 'arriving at a goal without travelling'. It is a transforming experience where we have all doubts destroyed and disbeliefs dispelled and tensions overcome. Spiritual experience alone gives us the certitude. We no longer see the things through the blinkers of the sense or discursive reason. It is pulling out the curtain, it is leading out the spirit of man. It is an awareness of our basic reality. It is the realisation of the *sarvatmabhava*. It is clear vision, direct vivid experience. It is not dialectical knowledge born of mental perspicacity or discursive thought. It is not the work of feeble imagination but is the fact of immediate comprehension. It is the natural condition of the Atman. The realisation of the mighty basic reality that all Atman are one and not many, *atma sarvasya atma spiritual realisation*, alone can give the fundamental faith for the fellowship of men. Without this realisation the talk of men about the brotherhood of all is just conventional good manners. It has no roots. It will dry up and bear no fruits. According to Sankara the fundamental and only reality is Spirit. It is designated by the term Brahman in the Upanishads. It is a non-composite, homogeneous consciousness principle. Its *svarupa laksana* is *satyam, jnanam* and *anandam*. It is unconditioned existence, unexcellable bliss and is infinite. It is not brute matter. Sankara

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does not hold to the doctrine of Materialistic non-dualism *bhutadvaita*. Reality is a consciousness principle. It is not an object of knowledge. It is not even a subject related to an object. It is a unique type of consciousness which is neither a subject nor an object. Subject and object are in it. It is self-luminous and self-manifest. It makes all objects clear to us. It is ever present. As the Gita puts it 'of the real there is no non-existence'. Brahman is unlike all things we know. It is posited on the authority of the Sruti. Brahman is declared as indeterminable. We cannot predicate anything about it for the simple reason, there is nothing besides it which it is not. Further to describe Brahman in terms of any predicate is to limit it. All description is a limitation. It militates against its infinitude. Whenever we describe anything we need a thing in terms of which to describe it. By what can we describe the knower of all knowledge? It is the basic reality hence it cannot be described. Students of logic experience difficulties in method of description. In a description we have a *subject* and a *predicate*, and a *relation* connecting them. If we ask ourselves the question, is the relation the same as the predicate or subject or is it different? If we say it is identical, then there is no predication secured. If we argue that the relation is different from the predicate and the subject, then we need another relation to connect them. This lands us in infinite regress. Hence the subject predicate relation which is the soul of all description is self-discrepant and is unintelligible in the last analysis, however useful it is in life. It is the aforesaid reasons that make Sankara regard Brahman as indeterminate (*nirguna*).

The concept of nirguna Brahman is supported by Sruti and sustained by logic and human reasoning. The realists who are accustomed to a subject-object logic are not able to comprehend the rich philosophical significance, and the astute logical thinking behind the concept. They cried it down as a mere blank negation and equated it with *sunya*. Sankara knew his critics well in advance and had anticipated their superficial logical criticism. He writes 'Brahman that is devoid of determination appear to the dull witted as nothingness'. Brahman is the real of the real. It is the cause of all that appears. Everything is explained in its terms. The *Katha* declares 'when that shines, everything shines after that, by its light all this is lighted (*tasya bhāsa sarvam idam vibhati* V. 15).'

In the history of human thought, throughout the ages, we find that whenever ultimate reality is clearly defined and precisely identified with the name and qualities of a particular deity, no doubt it makes for clarity. It establishes a sort of religious absolutism. One religion becomes the enemy of another. The powerful ones ridicule the others, persecute them in the name of their absoluteness, seek to convert them by peaceful and other types of methods also. This leads to religious wars, and the consequent brutalities perpetrated in the name of religions. We have in the words of Swift enough religions to hate one another. We make stones of our hearts and believe that we alone possess the final absolute truth and others are in absolute folly. Such a contingency does not arise in the case of Sankara's Brahman. Each man and each religion seeks to spell Brahman in terms of its idiom and knowledge. The creedal formulations are many. All are of the same Truth. The truth is one, but men call it by different names. The concept of Brahman as nirguna, overcomes the defects of a *unipersonal* manifestation of God and its consequent dogmatism, inhumanity and intolerance. It makes room for the fellowship of faiths by stressing the fundamental unity of existence. Rigidly defined theologies, become intolerant and dogmatic. In their fanaticism they produce unbelievably horrible, large-scale crimes in the name of God. They are responsible for manifestly untrue and profoundly evil doctrines. They in their essential nature carry with them qualities that produce hate and controversy. A completely described God is offset by grave disadvantages which the history of organised religion clearly indicates. Humorously Eck-

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hart admonishes the devotee 'Why do you pray to God? Everything you say about God is untrue'. St. John of the Cross says,

> 'All that the imagination can imagine and the reason conceive and understand in this life is not and cannot be, a proximate means of union with God.'

Brahman is a formless, timeless, non-egoistic unitary consciousness which underlies all the apparently separate egos in the world. Brahman is simultaneously both Atman and Brahman. The core of the self is Atman. It is the veil that hides the underlying consciousness principle from us. It is the real, waiting to be released. Sankara's genius is shown in the way he has logically exposed the defects in the prevalent doctrines of the relation between Brahman and the world and the souls. The most popular doctrine is the relation of the cause and the effect i.e. the creationist theory. The things of the world are created by God. The problem of creation and the logical concept of cause-effect relation are bristling with difficulties. There is the problem of evil, there is the difficulty of finding out an adequate and moral purpose for creation. The concept of causation is based on the concept of relation. We have already seen how the concept of relation is shot through and through with inconsistencies. The doctrine that the cause itself transforms into the effect is also not free of defects. If the world is the transformation of *Prakriti* as the Sankhyas describe, such an explanation is unintelligible because a meaningful evolution is not possible for an insentient *Prakriti*. If the world is contended to be the transformation of Brahman itself such a position is assailed by a number of doubts. The imperfections of the world touch the perfection of Brahman. Further, there is the contingency of Brahman experiencing all the sorrows of all men, a position which falsifies the Upanishadic description of Brahman. When we have seen that the above doctrines are not satisfactory, it goes without saying that Sankara felt the Buddhist doctrine far removed from truth. The Buddhist doctrine held the view that knowledge and the existence of objects is a flux of momentariness. Nothing endured more than a moment. Sankara criticises the school of *vijnanavada* idealism from the standpoint of realism. He criticises realism from the standpoint of idealism. He refutes the doctrine that objects are momentary in their existence. He asks the question who is there to affirm that they come into existence and endure for a moment. Sankara refutes the doctrine of the *sunyavada* also. It is Sankara's feeling of unsatisfactoriness that made him propound the *vivarta-vada*. The *vivarta-vada* holds the view that the cause and effect are not equally real. They belong to two different orders of Reality. They are not reciprocally dependent. The cause Brahman is not dependent on the effect. The effect is dependent on the cause. The defects and the different characteristics of the effect does not in the least affect the cause. It is a one-sided type of causation. Such is the relation between the world and Brahman.

Between Brahman and the world there is no reciprocal relation. The world as effect is dependent on Brahman. Brahman is its cause. The world is not as real as Brahman. It belongs to a different and a lower order of reality. Sankara designates the reality of Brahman as *paramarthika-satta* and the reality of the world as *vyavaharika satta* i.e. apparent reality. The world's reality is no doubt not absolute like that of Brahman. But this does not mean that Sankara reduces the world to the level of dream experience. The world of dream experience is designated as *pratibhasika* reality. The world is on a higher level than this. It is the world and is not like the dream world, a separate world to each. So our world of waking life has objective significance. The world is not the creation of the jiva according to Sankara. The jiva is only an enjoyer and Iswara is its creator. The world of experience is the joint creation of the personal God of Sankara and *Maya*. Hence it is unfair to describe Sankara as an illusionist. Dr Radhakrishnan has best described the position: 'unreal the world is but illusory it is not'. Another important doctrine in the philosophy

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of Sankara is the affirmation of the divinity of the individual soul. Many religions and systems of philosophy look upon man as the fallen angel. They say he is a creature and can never become the creator. They grant salvation to those to whom God gives his grace and the rest are thrown into hell. Sankara's position is a bold contrast to the other views. He believes that it is the power of *maya* that hides the real nature of man which is Brahmanhood, and projects in its place the finitude of man. With the onset of philosophic wisdom and the consequent spiritual realisation, man realises his real nature here and now on earth in the embodied state. *Moksa* is not an attainment of anything new. It is self-realisation. It is not bringing into being something which is not there but is a making known of what is already there. This is the concept of *jivan-mukti*. This spiritual experience is open to one and all. It is the birth right of all human beings. Sankara pleads for *sarva-mukti*. Sankara's doctrines of *jivan mukti* and *sarva-mukti* are unique contributions to religion. These doctrines disclose the great tolerance and universalism characteristic of Sankara's thought. Sankara asserts the dignity and the divinity of man in a grand manner. He declares in his commentary on the *Taittiriya Upanishad* 'that the excellence of man consists in his capacity to reason and in his free will' (*jnana karma adhikara*). Sankara in a very illuminating passage towards the end of his commentary on the *Prasnopanishad* states, 'the student of Advaita Vedanta, leaves the causes of the origination of all disputes among the disputants themselves, and keeps his sense of the real alive. Protected by their example the Knower of the Vedas reposes happily.' Sankara laments the barren dialectics and vain argumentation of logic, and the dry scholarship of the grammarians.

Brahmanubhava or the realisation of the unity of existence or *sarvatmabhava* is an experience of the greatest value. It is *moksa*. It is liberation from all the trammels. It is valuable because it has a self-evident sensibility like the aesthetic experience but is much higher. Such an experience or to be more correct, realisation, brings about a wonderful transformation in our thought, feelings and character, which is supremely desirable not only to us but is manifestly helpful and joyous to our fellow men. It is this experience that makes us understand the sense and the value of the unity and solidarity of the world. It is such an experience that enables us to practise universal compassion, ungrudging love, and understand the true meaning of such portentous phrases as 'God is love', 'the world is my family'. This experience in the Upanishadic terminology gives us 'fearlessness' (*abhaya*), *abhaya* produces *ahimsa*. Fear of death is also overcome. In the words of Eckhart these men, 'give out in love what is taken in contemplation'. Spiritual experience is the strongest force for the regeneration of man. It is the most powerful instrument for the remaking of man and through that for the establishment of a New Social Order. Men who busy themselves to improve others without such an experience act from mere habit and their humanism has no roots. It disappears like the night's paint with the first wash in the morning. Hence the Upanishads and Sankara refer to spiritual experience as the *Great* (*bhuma*) and as the basic to all our joys and experiences of bliss. Realisation of the true nature of the self is bliss. The pursuit of this basic intrinsic pleasure is the highest a man seeks. In the celebrated dialogue between Maitreyi and her husband, she asks him for that instruction and refuses all else. She asks her husband 'what shall I do with all this mass of things, if I do not attain immortality by that'. Yajnavalkya says that there is no hope of immortality by wealth. Then he proceeds to instruct her that self-knowledge is the solvent and supreme pleasure. It is because of this all things are pleasant to us, and not in themselves.

The message of Sankara has a terrific topicality. It has an abiding vitality in it. Its vitality is not meant for one age or one time. It is eternal. It is neither old nor new. It

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has a contemporary relevance for our age. We who live in the dawn of the atomic age have a great deal to learn from Advaita. The Advaita Philosophy is not a closed system of thought like other systems in the East or the West. It is attempting to rise above the view that we can intellectually give a completely satisfactory account of Reality. No system is a complete account of Reality. No system possesses the disclosure of the complete Reality. Hence it is wrong to define Sankara's Advaita as one other alternative to other systems. He does not subscribe to the logic of either this or that. He says all these systems and plus something else. He puts forth the objections to any way which claims to know the mystery. Hence it is called *anirvacaniya* indeterminable in terms of the real and the unreal. Few systems are more universal than Sankara's. His greatest contribution is his positive interpretation of Brahman. He restored the glory of the Upanishads and their message in an age of barren nihilism and blind formalism of the Mimamsakas. Sankara's religion satisfies both the demands of the intellect and the needs of the human heart.

ALAMBAZAR MATH

And the Inception of the Vow of Service

(Continued from the previous issue)

SWAMI AKHANDANANDA

Navadwip

Next I alighted and took my *asana* (seat of the Sannyasis) in the chapel (Akhra) of Gourgopal, which was the nearest. The image of Gourgopal was a big one ; it resembled the image of Narugopal (the infant Krishna on all fours looking up in expectation of a sweet). The votary was a Brajavasi (inhabitant of Braja, Vrindavan). Due to long stay in Bengal he had turned a Bengalee. He received me cordially. I bathed at a secluded part of the Ganga. Then I came back to Navadwip, took the Prasadam (consecrated food) in some temple and returned to the Akhra of Gourgopal. Then on the open corridor, meant for circumambulation of the temple, I spread a mat and spent the night there. To the votary of Gourgopal I spoke in Hindi. He lent me a copy of *Gitagobinda* (a Sanskrit book of songs, composed by the poet Jayadeva, describing the Lila or sports of Sri Krishna) from which I read in a tuneful tone whenever I had leisure.

The very day I came to Navadwip I went to see the 'Pākā Tol' (biggest Sanskrit school) there in the afternoon. Even then Sanyasi students from Western India studied the Nyaya (logic) philosophy there. I had a prolonged talk with the famous scholar Rajkrishna Tarkapanchanan, Principal of the school. He spoke in favour of Dualism basing his arguments on the authority of the Svetasvatara Upanishad. I took the side of Nondualism.

Then we came out together and reached the house of Braja Vidyaratna, the famous Smārta (scholar of Hindu jurisprudence) of Navadwip. From the outer gate of the house I saw two beautiful life-size images of Nitai and Mahaprabhu Sri Chaitanya. My low bow even at the gate astonished Tarkapanchanan and he said, 'That you, a Paramahamsa Sanyasi, should bow with such a deep regard ! Certainly this does not become you.' His words puzzled me and I asked, 'Why, sir, do you not regard Chaitanya Mahaprabhu as an Avatar (incarnation of God) ?' 'No,'

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said he, 'we take him merely for a great devotee.' I had never the idea that the scholars of Navadwip still do not regard Mahaprabhu as an Avatar.

The next day after my bath I came into that Braja Vidyaratna's house for my Bhiksha (food begged by a Sanyasi) and saw in the room on the outer yard the said beautiful life-size images of Nitai and Chaitanya and also pictures of Kailas and Vaikuntha (mythological abodes of Siva and Vishnu respectively), painted on the wall on two sides of the images. At a corner of the temple there was also a beautiful model of Braja Vidyaratna. It was a living resemblance and evinced the great skill of the clay-modellers of Ghurni, Krishnanagar. In that temple there were arrangements for regular worship and offering of eatables. One day I had *prasadam* there.

At the centre of Navadwip there is *poramatala*. There are houses all around it. Around the base of a gigantic banyan tree is a platform of solid masonry work. Many a Brahmin scholar, after his evening service, gathers here and indulges in noisy discussions. One day I was seated for sometime at this *poramatala* when some Pandits came and sat round me. One of them put this question to me, 'Sir, can a Sudra, by caste, allow a Brahmin to take the dust of his feet? There is one Jnanananda Avadhut here, who does so.' I knew that Jnanananda Avadhut (Nityagopal) was then there. In reply I said, 'The Avatars, Rama, Krishna and others, were not born of Brahmins, but how is it that they are worshipped as their ideals by so many saints and Brahmins?' Hardly had I said this when the Pandits shouted, 'Hallow Nyayachunchu, Tarkaratna, Vidyabagis, all come hither, here is one of that colour, belonging to the group of Jagabandhu.' With such taunts, mockery and jeering they surrounded me. Humbly did I pray to them again and again to enter into a discussion on the basis of the scriptures, but they turned a deaf ear to my requests and shot many a vile word at me. 'Save me, oh save me' was my feeling then and I took to my heels and breathed a sigh of relief by taking refuge at the blessed feet of Gourgopal. On that one occasion I had knowledge of the learning and manners of a class of Brahmin Pandits of Navadwip. It sorely mortified me.

For long I had the desire to see a devout Vaishnava (worshipper of Vishnu). Such Vaishnavas might live incognito in Navadwip but I had not the fortune to come across one.

Four or five days after my arrival at Navadwip, one afternoon, Sri Bisweswar Bhattacharya, Head Master of Navadwip High School, and Vice Chairman of the Municipality, Sri Binodelal Goswami and some other teachers saw me and said, 'Sir, we have been coming here these two or three days, only this day have we got hold of you.' Bisweswar Babu invited me to have my Bhiksha at night at his home. After they had left I heard that they got news about me from the votary of Gourgopal.

At night as I came to the house of the Head Master I found in his drawing room many educated men waiting for me. Another thing attracted my notice. I saw a good picture of Swamiji, in the pose of his address at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, hanging on the wall, and on a table below it there were a copy of Swamiji's Chicago Address (first published by S. C. Mitra) and some other booklets. It gave me great joy. I never told anyone of my spiritual teacher. 'A dumb man makes no enemy'. Our talk concerning modern religion and the condition of the country continued till midnight. I gave reply to many questions. After taking my night meal I told Bisweswar Babu that he would no more see me as I would leave before the day dawned.

I got up before daybreak, had my bath at a solitary place and had *prasadam* at the Akhra of Gourgopal. Incidentally the votary asked me, 'Are you Swami Vivekananda — come incognito?' 'How say you,' said I, 'who told you that?' 'Your talk yesternight at the master's place,' said he, 'created in their mind the impression that you are none but Swami Vivekananda.' I then became very

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eager to give the Head Master all particulars about myself.

In the afternoon as I came to the cloth-shop of Benodelal Goswami he lost no time to take me to the Head Master's house. I said to Bisweswar Babu and others, 'How did it strike you that I was Swami Vivekananda in disguise?' They said, 'Why did you not speak about yourself? Then your words tallied with those of Swamiji. We have gone through all the published books of Swamiji. Secondly, your features resemble his. Our impression is due to all these causes.' I then told them that I was his Gurubhai (spiritual brother), my words naturally tallied with his and many before I came out on a journey, told me that in facial appearance I resembled him. I then informed them that on the advice of physicians Swamiji was then at Darjeeling.

For spiritual talks they wanted to keep me at a good house near theirs. But the very next day at dawn I went to Kundghata across the Ganga.

Kundghata — Katwa

The landlord of Kundghata descended from a relative of Jagannath Misra, Sri Chaitanya's father. His earnest request compelled me to be at his house for two nights. I found great joy at his ecstatic dance at Harinam Sankirtan (singing in praise of God). From there I went to Katwa to see the hut of Kesab Bharati.

At Katwa I was received as a guest of Govindadev Babu, Munsif. He read out to me from the *Indian Mirror* that as the Raja of Khetri, Rajputana, had come down to Calcutta, Swamiji had come from Darjeeling to meet him.

At Katwa there exists no such thing as Keshab Bharati's hut. I only saw a cemetery ascribed to him. Here I found an old famous and very learned Pandit of Bhagavata, and spent a night with him.

On learning that it was only thirty-six miles off, I left Katwa for Murshidabad the next day.

On the way to Murshidabad

On the way I saw the *mela* (fair) of Agradwip. At the house of the gentleman whose guest I was at Agradwip I became intimate with Pandit Gangasankar Vidyasagar of Harinathpur. I learnt from him that his home lay on my way to Murshidabad and that for some time a Sanyasi of Western India had been living there. I was hard pressed to consent to stop there a day or two.

There are graphic descriptions of the *mela* of Gopinathji of Agradwip in books like *Chaitanya Bhagavat*. I stopped at Agradwip for two days and left for Murshidabad.

Now on my way I met cowboys who looked emaciated. Famine had caused this. It was from them that I got the news of famine. At the Math I had never heard of famine in Bengal. From my meagre remaining fund I gave the cowboys a pice or two.

On the way I halted a night at the Kali temple of Juronpukur. The seat of the Mother is the base of a gigantic banyan tree. Some Tantric aspirant or other lives there. There are some cattle and an endowment for the service of the Mother.

Approaching the police station of Kaliganj I saw a tent at a distance. On enquiry I learnt that a European Circle Officer had come from Krishnanagar for distribution of rice among the famine-stricken people in the villages. On hearing this I wished to see him.

As I was passing by the police station I saw a boy on the open shed calling a person awfully foul names. Such filthy language had never before reached my ears. The man was passing by the police station — that was his only offence. This was too much for me. I came before the police station and gave the boy a sound snubbing. To be thus taken to task suddenly by a Sanyasi with a turban and wearing ochre coloured cloth nonplussed the boy. The man, with tears in his eyes, held my feet as he said, 'Father, but for you they would have probably manhandled me.'

I learnt from the man that the European gentleman was not in his tent and that the

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Vidyasagar lived near by. I had not gone far leaving the police station when two or three police men came and took me to the Sub-Inspector of Police. Getting into the police station I saw that the Sub-Inspector was a young man and had his home at Jorasanko and that he was a Vaidya (physician) by caste. As he asked my whereabouts I stated everything candidly. But he was not satisfied. He suspected that I was an officer of the Intelligence Branch of the Police and enquired how many there were in my party. As I refused to make any reply he threatened to put me under arrest. Then he asked me, 'Is it a fact that you threatened that boy?' 'Have I done anything wrong by rebuking that boy?' said I. "How is it that your servant uses filthy words towards an innocent passerby and you merely look on." Then I went off saying that I would be at night at the house of Pandit Gangasankar Vidyasagar of that village.

I met the Vidyasagar at his house and told him all about the Sub-Inspector. In the afternoon came the Sub-Inspector and the Post Master of the place. The Pandit told them plainly what he knew about me and added, 'He is a genuine Sanyasi, there is no doubt about it. But the peculiarity with him is that he feels for the distressed state of the country. His principal aim in life is to remove distress. Such a patriotic Sanyasi have I never seen before.' On hearing this they went their way. After a stay of two days at the village I resumed my journey to Murshidabad.

Plassey

Now my way lay through Plassey. The history of Plassey is engraved for ever in the heart of every son of Bengal. The lines of the Bengali poet Nabinchandra Sen :

> 'The military band of the English army struck a note which was reverberated in the battle-field, the waters of the Ganga and the mango tope.'

came back to my mind on my way through Plassey. As I enquired of a farmer where the battle-field of Plassey was, he took me to the mango tope and said, 'Here is the battle-field.' Immediately I had a queer feeling, for sometime I remained dumb and dazed. At Plassey I stayed two days at the Akhra (monastery) of a Gharbari Udasi (a follower of Nanak). I secured a copy of *Manusamhita* and kept awake at night to read it. On my way from Plassey to Murshidabad I stopped for a day at a village and then reached the village Dādpur at nightfall.

Relief work starts first at Dadpur

On both sides of the road there were shops of various kinds. I spent the whole night on the verandah of a shop. I had now but a four-anna piece left. The Nawabs had a stable for their elephants here at Dadpur.

Early in the morning I washed my hands and face in the Ganga and was coming towards the bazaar when I found a Muslim girl of about fourteen, clad in dirty rags, weeping bitterly. She held on her waist an earthen jar the bottom of which had given way. On seeing me she said, 'Father, there is famine, we have nothing at home to eat. We had in our home only this earthen jar and two earthen pans. There is no second vessel at home to hold water. For fear lest mother should beat me I am crying.' I took her with me and bought her an earthen jar worth two pice and some fried rice of the same value. Hardly had the shop-keeper paid me back the small change of three annas when there gathered at the shop some twelve boys and girls of different ages of the neighbouring village Maradighi and piteously appealed for help, saying that due to famine they had nothing to eat. I at once asked the vendor to distribute among them fried rice worth the three annas. Now I was a Sanyasi with an empty purse and so had not the means to give them relief. On hearing this they left the place.

The shop-keeper then said to me, 'A circle officer has been deputed here from the District Headquarters for distribution of rice. It would be very good of you to see him.' I lost no time in seeing him. I learnt from him

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that if I reported the matter to the Assistant Magistrate at the District town, gratuitous relief in the shape of rice would be given to the famine-stricken poor. Mr. Panton, Assistant Magistrate, was then in the P.W.D. Inspection bungalow.

I now intended to see the officer. A little while past noon I came to the bungalow. There I found waiting under the hot sun, on the road before the bungalow, some thirty famine-stricken men and women with their children. Their intention was to appeal to the officer.

I saw some famine-stricken boys pelting stones at a mango tree in the bungalow for green mangoes. No mango had dropped, but the keeper of the bungalow, an upcountry man, was calling the boys names and rushing at them with a tall bamboo stick to beat them. At this I ordered the boys to gather the mangoes and gave the keeper a sharp rebuke, at which he left the place.

I then came to the verandah of the bungalow intending to see the officer. His orderly, with folded hands, asked me to see his master after he had enjoyed his siesta. I waited for some time, after which I had no mind to see the officer.

I returned to the Circle Officer and advised him to be upright and sympathetic in his dealings.

My next thought was that as it was not possible to do any good to the famine-stricken, of what use was my staying here any further? After a day, when in the morning I set out to leave Dadpur a middle-aged woman came to me and said, 'Father, unless you do something for the octogenerian Gaya Vaishnavi, she is sure to die in a day or two.'

It was now a problem for me. I explained to her my inability to render any help but she refused to be convinced. So there was nothing for me but to go back. I found in a very small dingy hut Gaya Vaishnavi lying covered with excreta. A foul smell forbade me to go in. I learnt from the former woman that the Vaishnavi lived on the land of Jibankrishna Das, a Kayastha of Dadpur.

I saw the said Jibankrishna Babu and told him of the miserable plight of the old woman. He told me that the old woman would come every day to his house for food, but of late she had failed to come. I told him that because of an attack of diarrohea the old woman had not come to beg and requested him to send her food to her hut till the circle officer began distributing rice. He consented. Thus there was an arrangement for the food of the old woman. Next, she must have a piece of cloth. That want was met by the kind-hearted clerk of the circle officer. I was full of joy.

I came back to the old woman's hut and asked the other woman to fetch some cowdung and a jar of water. As I was about to cleanse the hut the woman said, 'Father, you need not do that, leave it to me.' She first cleansed the old woman's body with water and a rag and covered her with the new cloth.

In the meantime there arrived for the old woman a dish of rice and soup from Jiban Babu's house. As I helped her in eating that rice and soup, copious tears of joy trickled down her eyes and she went on saying I had been her son in her former births and such like things. I said, 'Why do you speak of previous births, I am your son in this very life.'

That was the end of the episode. It was no use staying in this place in the grip of famine. So I left Dadpur and went towards Berhampore.

(To be continued)

Who appreciates religion? Who appreciates learning? I do not care for liberation, or for devotion, I would rather go to a hundred thousand hells, 'doing good to others (silently) like the spring'—this is my religion. I do not want to have any connection with lazy, hard-hearted, cruel and selfish men. SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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LET US TURN TO GOD

B. S. MATHUR

To Wordsworth poetry is emotion recollected in tranquillity. Poetry has lot of excitement : it is passionate. But Wordsworth tries to see a certain presence in poetry and that is tranquillity, cessation of emotion. This cessation of emotion is possession of peace, a new feeling of sustenance, face to face with complications of life. Wordsworth is ever out for finding peace everywhere. He wants man to have his Friend who can give him escape from life's turmoil. He writes in the course of his beautiful poem, 'The Force of Prayer' :

> Oh ! there is never sorrow of heart
> That shall lack a timely end,
> If but to God we turn, and ask
> Of Him to be our Friend !

Wordsworth is aware of life's difficulties but he is not to forget that he is a man and that he can turn to a Friend, who can sustain him through the complications of life, who can verily and ultimately lead him on to a lasting possession of peace. Man has to face sorrow that might appear (or that might be) endless. Yet man has his companion. That companion he is not to forget. In all his actions, deeds and visions, his Friend must be near him to take him by His hand through the great ocean of life's worries. The end is not worry ; that is not here to be our constant companion like our shadow. There is to be the end of worry : tranquillity is the end. Life is a great poem which begins in emotions and ends in peace : a writing, a poem in tranquillity. When life's fever is over, it is bound to be over in the great Presence, there is great all-gathering of peace, out of which life's great adventure of sweetness and light can emanate, can body forth to build up a magnificent structure of life, where people of the world might live in peace and rhythm, born of great divinity inside us. This is rising of man to his utmost inch of his personality : that is living in the image of God : that is Man going side by side with God.

Wordsworth is here concentrating on the hour of sorrow. He wants man to turn to God in that hour. But life all round and in all moments may appear to be covered by sorrow. It is for this reason that Rabindranath Tagore writes :

> 'Hands cling to hands and eyes linger on eyes : thus begins the record of our hearts.'

Here is not undiluted worldly love as we find it in our picture of life or as we want it to find here as if we were ever in the Cinema-world. Your hands cling to great hands, hands of God. Your eyes are to rest on His eyes, and then let us be on with the game of life, on with our struggle to make our life happy, harmonious and rythmical. Tagore is never in two minds. He is absolutely clear and he rightly says :

> 'I have come to thee to take thy touch before I begin my day.
> Let thy eyes rest upon my eyes for awhile.
> Let me take to my work the assurance of thy comradeship, my friend.
> Fill my mind with thy music to last through the desert of noise !
> Let thy Love's sunshine kiss the peaks of my thoughts and linger in my life's valley where the harvest ripens.'

Tagore is definitely aware of the sad valley of darkness we live in. Hence this appeal to his Friend. Friend is God Himself. The idea looks identical but Tagore is deeper. He has a bigger and a continuing philosophy of life. He wants the great presence of God in our entire life, not merely in the hour of sorrow. He wants to touch life with divinity and sweetness entire. Before a man is to begin his day, his walk in the valley of darkness, he needs light and let that light be His light, light that can, at mere touch or at mere

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call, turn darkness into sunshine of day. And then the harvest, great adventure of life, can ripen, can thrive and body forth in all vigour and sweetness. Life is not a simple affair, not a small thing. Life has to unfold itself: it has to unfold divinity that resides in man. In a way, it has to unfold God Himself. Here a philosophy is communicated, a philosophy that can make life real and pleasurable. Man has to live in the great presence, in divine joy and music. Man's life is to be a ceaseless prayer. God is to be our constant companion. Man is his personality, his deeds, dreams and visions, and in them all God must live. That way there is to be all-embracing peace and harmony in the world. There is inside peace and also peace outside. Man's mind, then, is at rest, and then, man can be busy with his endless venture of life, then he may have peace and tranquillity in ceaseless work. Peace of mind is an opening out, opening to great opportunities of life: verily, it is a great emergence, great treasure of mind, which till now purely mental, is made concrete and man has made his achievements. God can give us peace of mind and we can turn to our great adventure of achievements, that is *going* with God.

Tagore does not consider man weak. He believes in work and he wants man to concentrate upon work, the great adventure of life, which can never be complete without man's share, indeed, his leading role. He is to begin his day but he is to think of the great comradeship without which it might not be possible for him to be happy. Tagore is for the assurance, the presence of God, from the very beginning of the day, and he wants this assurance of comradeship to be there till the great end, when man has completed his voyage through the desert of noise, to achieve a lasting peace. One cannot say that Tagore is running away from life; he is, indeed, running into it to convert noise into music and harmony.

Behind this poem 'assurance of comradeship', in the mind of Tagore, there is the picture of a real man, who has hands to work, who has head to think and who has heart to feel. This man in spite of his powers lacks the great strength of his Friend, his God. God's touch, his divinity, must interfere with man to make his life shaped by divinity.

Here is a man who has commenced his work, his eyes are weary as he looks unable to face life's difficulties. He has noise about him. He sees a desert and there is harvest to ripen. He has thoughts that confuse him. Then he turns to God. A notable change, indeed! Noise is music now; the desert ripens into a harvest. His eyes rest on His eyes, his hands cling to His Hands. His thoughts are clear and he is face to face with the great Presence.

Tagore combines man and God in the drama of life to be played successfully. This is the record of our hearts and there is a great companionship, more than the assurance itself, and in this companionship there is joy coupled with wisdom, intellectual thoughts kissed by faith of divinity. Tagore, therefore, sings:

> Do not keep to yourself the secret of your heart, my friend!
> Say it to me, only to me, in secret.
> You who smile so gently, softly whisper,
> my heart will hear it, not my ears.

Tagore aims at intimate association of man and God, that is, at a life of sweetness and joy and also of prayer to give us deathless peace and consolation.

When God is realised, the world never appears empty. He who has attained Him sees that the Lord Himself has become all these—the universe and its creatures. When he feeds his children, he feels as if he is feeding Gopala Himself; he looks upon his parents as God and serves them in the same manner. — SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

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NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

Swami Budhananda formerly Editor of the *Vedanta Kesari* is now Assistant Minister at the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, New York.

Swami Chidbhavananda is the Head of the Ramakrishna Mission Tapovanam, Tirupparaithurai, Tiruchirapalli Dt.

Dr V. N. Sharma, PH.D. (Heidelberg) formerly a teacher in a German international school (Odenwald schule) and a visiting Professor at the famous German University of Jena, and now in charge of a children's school in Madras endeavours to introduce our readers to our eternal and immortal world. The chapter he presents in this connection is a part of the German original, published in Germany, some years ago, by the Board of Education, under the title 'India's Contribution to the Science of Education'. The present article forms the first of a series that will be published in these pages.

Dr P. Nagaraja Rao's article on 'Shankara and His Philosophy' is a summary of his speech delivered at the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore in April, 61. Formerly of the Karnataka University, Dharwar, he is now at the Government College, Mercara.

Sri B. S. Mathur is the Principal of M. M. H. College, Gazibad.

ADULTERATION

It is beyond the imagination of the common man to assess to what depths his fellow being can sink in his lust for lucre. Man's avidity for wealth has introduced the monster of adulteration which though penalised, has been continuing through all the ages of history. It has covered every sort of trade and the worst offenders are those who deal in foodstuff. The crimes of the most hardened criminal pale into insignificance when compared with that of a trader who adulterates food. Nothing seems to deter him, neither the severe laws of the land, nor the fear of another world nor the pricks and qualms of his own conscience. The laws hold no threat for him, for he finds convenient loop-holes in them through which he can pass unscathed. About the world beyond either he has no belief in it or fully believes that his ill-gotten money can get a passport into the highest heavens by giving in charity and such other works. And as for his conscience it is doubtful whether it is alive at all. If it were would anyone adulterate foodstuff knowing fully well that by doing so he is undermining the health of thousands of his own brethren, sapping the very vitality of the people and enervating them?

This is the condition in which India finds itself to-day. What is the way out of this moral degeneration? Laws can hardly help as long as there is no general awakening among the masses themselves and as long as justice is not meted out in the shortest possible time. The very name of the law-courts frightens the common man who lives his life by working from day-to-day. A day's absence at work means a day's fast not only for him but for the whole family. In such circumstances he cannot afford to waste months in attending courts and therefore suffers silently all the exploitation and injuries. Summary trial and deterrent punishment is necessary in dealing with at least this type of offence.

But the ideal remedy would be for the trader himself to understand his moral obligation to the community for the protection which it gives to his trade. Today many trades have been nationalised and private enterprises have been fully excluded from them. Why? Because the private enterprises did not carry

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out the trust placed in them by the people, did not look to the conveniences of the community. The result was a reaction of their own action. There may be flaws in the nationalised industries but that the nation bears patiently being conscious that they can get better deal if they voice their grievances and when the mistakes are traced out. Let the tradesman take a lesson from the pages of history and be humane in his dealings, not only in words but in action too. Let him refuse to buy and to deal in non-genuine goods. He may not become rich overnight but he shall never feel want, never feel helpless, never want peace of mind and in the long run leave a great example for the future generations.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

A YANKEE AND THE SWAMIS: By John Yale. Pub. George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London. Pp. 224. Price 25s.

In the midst of all round success John Yale felt a void in his early thirties. He turned to several panaceas fashionable in modern society: psychotherapy, sociology, churches; but he found no solution till one day he purchased and read a copy of the *Gita* translated by Swami Prabhavananda. There he 'felt a clue to the answer which his heart had always told him must surely be waiting somewhere and which could cope with the state of emergency his life had reached.' With rare courage and determination the young man wound up his business and went to the Vedanta Society in Hollywood and sought out its leader Swami Prabhavananda under whose guidance he joined the organisation as a probationer.

A year or two later Mr. Yale desired to study the Ramakrishna Movement, with which he had decided to throw in his lot, nearer its native home in India, meet the elder Monks who had received direct initiation or inspiration from the Master and from Swami Vivekananda, and undertook a journey to India. The present book is a frank, readable and interesting account of his travels, his visits to the several (38) Centres of the Order in India apart from pilgrimages to places of spiritual and religious importance in the country.

The author has a sensitive mind which receives and registers contacts and impressions always looking to the brighter side of things; that shows his spiritually awakened nature. Not that the unflattering elements which are as plentiful in the Indian society as in any other, escape his attention. But his good taste prevents him from speaking of them though one can read them in between the lines. He observes: "I have not wanted this to be simply a travel book. I dare hope more than that, to have made a souvenir which will add something to the contemporary knowledge of an important work and trend." And, indeed, he has given a work not only of documentary value but equally of a spiritually educative content.

M. P. PANDIT

ALL MEN ARE BROTHERS: *Life and Thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi, as told in his own words*: Compiled and Edited by Krishna Kripalini. Pp. 253. Price Rs. 3. Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad-14.

This is a cheap edition of the UNESCO publication under the same caption, and presents in a single volume the life and thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi, as narrated in his own words. There can be no two opinions on the need for such a publication. For in truth the mind and mission of one of the greatest figures of history have an eternal value: the more so because never were politics and spiritual life so closely interlinked or intermingled. It is therefore not a tall claim (P. 232) that his 'message and methods in their essentials were for the whole world' Gandhiji aimed at perfection and did not mean to lay down any sect or dogma, but sought merely to 'apply the eternal truths to our life and problem.' (P. 61.) He was rooted in Hindu Dharma and Philosophy,—an 'advaitin' to the core as he had himself claimed; he had drunk deep in the pierian springs of Hindu mysticism with complete faith in 'Karma and good samskaras.' (P. 65.) Passages extracted in the book illustrate his faith in Hindu Metaphysics. 'Divine Knowledge', he says, 'is not borrowed from books but has to be realised in oneself' (P. 80): "The desire for enjoyment creates bodies for the soul. When this desire vanishes, there remains no need for the body and man is freed from the cycle of births and deaths." 'I believe in the absolute One-ness of God. The rays of the Sun are many through refraction, but they have the same

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source'. All the same, he was not slow to acknowledge his debt to the West and to the Western savants. To Thoreau and Ruskin, he says, he owed his transition 'overnight' from a lawyer and city dweller to a poor mendicant clad in loin cloth (P. 59); and he attributed to the permeating influence of Tolstoy, his unshakeable faith in non-violence. Incidentally he has set down with clarity and precision the mission and philosophy of Tolstoy in pp. 226-228.

In the political sphere, his gospel was for the greatest good of all rather than of the 'greatest number' which latter is 'a heartless doctrine'.

Gandhiji, it is interesting to note, laid great store by music. He would have it included in the syllabus for primary education (P. 203) and himself desired that 'great musicians should attend every congress and conference' and teach mass music.

Altogether, a book for everyone to read and treasure, not only as one embodying the thoughts and doings of a perfect man, but of one who had been a perfect master of English prose as well.

S. RAJAGOPALAN

OUR NEW RULERS: By 'Vighneshwara' (N. Raghunathan). Pub. B. G. Paul & Co., 4, Francis Street, Madras-1. Pp. 396. Price Rs. 5.00.

Vighneshwara has been an institution by himself and his pronouncements in the columns of the *Swatantra* during the editorship of Khasa Subba Rao and later in the pages of the *Swarajya*, were always eagerly looked forward to by the reading public. Each writing of his is a model of impeccable English, deep thought rendered in a style that is at once direct and weighty, with an undercurrent of humour—sardonic at times—adding to the enjoyment of the dispassionate reader.

The present publication is the second collection of these series of commentaries on men and matters. Entitled 'Our New Rulers',—a title that gives the clue to the nature of the contents that follow — the book is a withering *expose* of the shifts and inconsistencies in the policies of the party in power in the country. The over-all impression is of a mind steeped in classical learning, mature with worldly wisdom with perhaps an avoidable overdose of cynicism. One may or may not agree with his prescriptions but his analysis of the motives and actions of the men that rule is delightfully brilliant.

M. P. PANDIT

THE SCHOOL AND THE CENTENARY: By T. S. Avinashalingam. Pub. Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, Coimbatore. Pp. 74. Price Rs. 3.00.

Sri Avinashalingam is a noted educationist with progressive views and his present brochure is a product of good deal of thinking and practical wisdom. The Vidyalaya at Coimbatore, running under his direction, has sought to orient Education on the lines of the dynamic Thought of Swami Vivekananda with satisfying results. In this book the author invites other educational institutions to collaborate with him in his efforts to derive the maximum benefit for the students from the coming celebrations in 1963 of the Centenary of Swami Vivekananda. He gives a detailed and well-thought out scheme for a many-sided participation in the celebrations by the students and teachers with a view to their mental, moral and spiritual upliftment. The book deserves to be widely circulated all over the country but that is hardly possible at its high price. Perhaps a cheaper edition could be brought out.

M. P. PANDIT

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, VISAKHAPATNAM

REPORT FOR JANUARY 1960 TO MARCH 1961

The Ashrama apart from its Religious Service such as occasional lectures and celebration of birthdays of religious preceptors conducts a free Reading Room and Library, a cultural and recreation centre for children, a Sarada Bala Vihara (Preparatory School for Children) and an adult education centre. The Library had 2,308 books out of which 214 were issued during the year. The cultural and recreation centre imparts spiritual and cultural instructions on easy lines to children by means of simple prayers, stotras and stories from Puranas. A Library consisting of illustrated books was provided for the children. Documentary film shows were often arranged. Sarada Bala Vihara had 180 children on its roll. The adult education centre which

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was started for the benefit of fishermen, taught 12 adults to read and write during the year. The Ashrama provided a free water tap of drinking water on the roadside for the poor of the locality as there was no Municipal water supply in that area. The Ashrama is going to undertake to build an Auditorium and a School Building. The management while thanking the donors and all others who helped in various ways, appeals for funds for the auditorium, School and other activities of the Ashrama.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, SIVASWAMIPURAM EXTENSION, SALEM

REPORT FOR JANUARY 1960 TO MARCH 1961

The Ashrama is running a charitable dispensary and a library. 61,152 patients were treated in the dispensary including 24,993 new cases. The library had 1,025 books in different languages. Religious and cultural activities consisted of lectures, worship and celebration of birthdays. The total receipts in cash and kind including Government and other grants were Rs. 42,120.77 nP. and payments Rs. 42,062.49 nP. The management thanks the donors and subscribers and friends and appeals for funds for the construction of Doctors' quarters and compound wall for the ashrama premises.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, PATNA

REPORT FOR JANUARY 1960 TO MARCH 1961

Started in 1922 the Ashrama is rendering service in medical, religious, educational and cultural fields. The Homoeopathic Charitable Dispensary treated 81,434 patients and Allopathic Department 66,630 during the period. The Adbhutananda Upper Primary School had 246 students on the roll. There were 28 students in the Students' Home out of which 16 were maintained fully free. The Turiyananda Library issued 11,445 books. The Reading Room received 6 dailies and 75 periodicals. The Lecture Hall on the first floor of the Library Building was used for public lectures and discourses etc. Religious and cultural activities consisted of scriptural classes, lectures, worship and celebration of birthdays. The total receipts in all departments including last year's balance amounted to Rs. 1,23,897.73 and the total expenditure was Rs. 86,873.56. While thanking the subscribers, donors and friends the management appeals for their kind and continued support.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION MATRI-BHAVAN, CALCUTTA-26

REPORT FOR 1959-1961 MARCH

Started in 1950 the Centre is striving to serve all women irrespective of caste, creed and colour. At present there are 40 beds in the hospital, half of which are free and kept reserved for poor patients. In 1960 the institution had to face a crucial situation as its old building was declared dangerous and unsafe for hospital accommodation. The Management had to remove the patients to the ground floor of a new building to the office and outdoor clinic and demolish the building which used to accommodate 20 beds on the first floor and the nurses' quarters, kitchen, dining room etc. on the ground floor. The construction of a two storeyed building and a kitchen block and nurses' quarters has been undertaken. The management have still to procure Rs. 40,000 for completion of the buildings. 8,694 Ante-natal cases and 5,439 Post-natal cases were treated during 1959. 10,748 Ante-natal and 6,688 Post-natal cases were treated during the period January 1960 to March 1961. The number of Hospital Confinements was 1,754 during 1959 and 2,159 from January 1960 to March 1961. The Management thank the donors and supporters and appeal for funds for the completion of the buildings and acquisition of new land as the present area of the home is felt inadequate.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, BELUR MATH, HOWRAH

BIHAR FLOOD RELIEF WORK

APPEAL

Ramakrishna Mission is doing Relief work under Barhiya P. S. (in between Kiul and Mokameh junctions) in the district of Monghyr. Practically the whole of the Barhiya Thana has been devastated. The afflicted require all kinds of help. The Mission is distributing cotton blankets, dhotis and sarees and children's garments mainly.

We appeal to our generous countrymen to help us with funds for this work. Contributions will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the General Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P.O. Belur Math, (Howrah).

SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA,
General Secretary.

31-10-1961.

The birthday anniversary of the Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi falls on December 29, 1961.

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.... Be bold and face
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease.
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XLVIII JANUARY 1962 No. 9

FROM THE TREE OF DIVINE LORE

The nature of Atman is Eternity, Purity, Reality, Consciousness and Bliss just as luminosity is the nature of the sun, coolness of water, heat of fire.

By constant meditation (akin to the rubbing of firewood) is kindled the flame of Knowledge, which completely burns up the fuel of ignorance.

As the sun appears after the destruction of darkness by dawn, so Atman appears after the destruction of ignorance by knowledge.

On the destruction of the upadhis, he, the contemplative one, is totally absorbed in Vishnu, the All-pervading Spirit, like water in water, space in space, and light in light.

Realize that to be Brahman which, when seen, leaves nothing more to be seen, having become which, one is not born again into the world of becoming, and which, when known, leaves nothing else to be known.

Realize that to be Brahman which is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute, which is non-dual and infinite, eternal and One, and which fills all the quarters — all that is above and below and all that exists between.

Realize that to be Brahman which is non-dual, indivisible, One, and blissful, and which is indicated by Vedanta as the irreducible substratum after the negation of all tangible objects.

Realize that to be Brahman which is neither subtle nor gross; neither short nor long; without birth and change; without form, quality or colour.

Realize that to be Brahman by the light of which luminous orbs, like the sun and moon, are illumined, but which cannot be illumined by their light, and by which everything is illumined.

All that is perceived, all that is heard, is Brahman, and nothing else. Attaining the Knowledge of Reality, one sees the universe as the non-dual Brahman, Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute.

(Sri Sankaracharya: *Atmabodha*)
(Translation by Swami Nikhilananda)

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA THE SANNYASIN

The life of sannyasa in India has for ages been looked upon with high esteem. It was considered as the culminating point of the Hindu Society, for it was in this stage of life that man was free from all the worldly entanglements, free from the outside influences and inner hankerings, and because it was in this stage of life that he dedicated himself exclusively to seek the Infinite, and the Omnipresent Being. But with the onrush and the impact of Western scepticism the ideas and ideals seemed to undergo a metamorphosis. The land was being drawn into the vortex of materialism in the wake of the West. Things indigenous including religion lost their value in the eyes of the Westernized Indians, particularly so it was in the case of sannyasa.

It was at this time Sri Ramakrishna and following him his sannyasin disciples that showed by their life what a blessing to humanity, the life of a true sannyasin was. That it was the sannyasin alone who had attained *samadharshana*, same sightedness, that could be broad as the sky and deep as the ocean was proved by the life of Swami Vivekananda. What a marvellous life that was : of Swami Vivekananda ! From beginning to end it was a song of renunciation and self-sacrifice, a dedication to God and a longing for God-realisation. Nowhere in this symphony was there any break in the cadence nor any false note of selfishness. Like his well-trained and sweet voice that comforted, delighted and transported the listeners beyond the terrestrial planes, his life soothed, pleased and transformed the lives of those who came in close contact with him. Though he is not physically present amongst us today, his speeches and writings still instil into the readers the fire with which they were spoken and written and continue to influence and inspire their lives. To quote Romain Rolland : 'I cannot touch these sayings of his (Swami Vivekananda's), spread as they are through the pages of books at thirty years' distance, without receiving a thrill through my body like an electric shock. And what shocks, what transports must have been produced when in burning words they issued from the lips of the hero ! '

Of his many traits, his wide sympathy and universal love, sharp intellect and fine oratory, and his contribution to the cause of Hinduism are all too well known to need any mention here. But, what is not known, rather the lesser known aspect of his life is his inner life, the life of the sannyasin, which was the basis, as we shall see, of all his works, of all his wanderings, in short of every one of his actions.

It was in a noble family where the mother a pious lady, the father a liberal gentleman and the grandfather a nobleman turned monk that Narendra (premonastic name of Swami Vivekananda) was born. His birth itself was as a boon to his devout mother from Lord Shiva, to whom she had earnestly prayed for a son. Strange as it may seem, while yet a child in his wildest moods he quieted down at the utterance of Shiva's name showing that he had an intrinsic reverence and adoration for the great God. His mother's words of reproval : 'You will not get entrance to Shiva's abode if you do not behave,' were enough to calm down the boy and wean him away from naughty endeavours. Did the child then feel the pangs of separation from the Lord or was he reminded of his true nature — the eternal, the blissful, the free — that made him give up his pranks ?

The boy Narendra had an inordinate attraction for the monks as if foretelling his preference for such a life. He would have to give them something whenever they happened to come to his door. One day as nothing but a new piece of cloth that he wore was available Narendra gave it away. After this incident, people of the house used to lock him in a room whenever they saw a sannyasin in

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the neighbourhood. Yet if he happened to see them passing by that way he would throw them things from the windows of the locked room.

Another trait seen in him was his interest in the religious lore of ancient India as found in the stories of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. He would intently listen to his mother reading the Ramayana and whenever there was any discourse in the neighbourhood on the epic he would invariably attend it. Thus brought up he soon developed a liking for worship and meditation. He secured an image of Sita and Rama and bestowed all his love and affection upon the image by bedecking it with flowers and spending a long time in its presence immersed in recollection of the stories he had heard about them. An incident that happened one day, however, stands out very conspicuously in his early life. That day he had chosen a secluded spot on the terrace of the women's quarters of the house for his worship. Lest he should be disturbed he had locked the room from within. Sometime later people of the household found him missing. A vigorous search ensued which ultimately brought them to the locked door. They knocked and shouted without getting any response from within. Fearing something untoward might have befallen the boy the door was forced upon. But to their amazement they found the boy sitting calm and serene, lost to all outward consciousness before the flower-adorned image of Sitarama. So deep was his meditation that all the disturbance and noise of the search party could not bring him to the normal plane of consciousness.

Again it was in a strange way in which Narendranath was ushered into sleep. A spot of light appeared between his eye-brows and expanded and bathed his whole body with its mellow colours and as the mind was engaged in gazing at the phenomenon the body fell to sleep. This was an everyday occurrence with him, and as such he thought that it was natural with all until later when he verified it with one of his friends and came to know that it was peculiar to him. Sri Ramakrishna during his first contacts with Narendra had come to know of this experience of the boy through his insight into Naren's spiritual potentialities. Referring to this experience of Narendra the Master said that it was the sign of a *dhyana Siddha,* an adept in meditation from the very birth. It was therefore no wonder that Narendra used to lose himself in meditation when thinking about God, even as a boy. A rare privilege it was with Narendra to enjoy the complete control of the mind, for the experience of spiritual aspirants all along the march of time has been quite contrary. Control of the mind, has been and will be the problem of a *sadhaka* especially so when it meant directing the mind toward God. Arjuna a mighty hero, who it is said had conquered even sleep, voices his difficulty with the mind when he says: 'The mind, O! Krishna, is very fickle, turbulent, strong and obstinate and I think, like the wind, it is very difficult of control'.[1] Such a mind as this was under the perfect control of Narendra. How could he control such a rebellious mind? The answer can be found in the reply given by Sri Krishna to Arjuna: 'Undoubtedly, O mighty-armed one, mind is difficult to control but by constant practice and renunciation of desires it is possible to control it'.[2] Does not then the perfect control Narendra had over his mind point to the purity of his nature? Does it not point out a soul untouched by desire?

Further, the backbone of spiritual life is adherence to truth, say the Vedas. Sri Ramakrishna verified this in his own life. Speaking about the necessity of adhering to truth Sri Ramakrishna said, 'I could offer all things good and bad to the Divine Mother but I could not offer truth to Her.' No doubt it is

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[1] चञ्चलं हि मनः कृष्ण प्रमाथि बलवद्दृढम् ।
तस्याहं निग्रहं मन्ये वायोरिव सुदुष्करम् ॥
Gita VI. 34.

[2] असंशयं महाबाहो मनो दुर्निग्रहं चलम् ।
अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते ॥
Gita VI. 35.

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the daily vow of the Hindu that he will speak only the truth, (*satyam vadishyami*) but how few are able to put it into practice! But with Narendra it was quite different, he stuck to truth though at times it meant terrible suffering and giving up long cherished ideas. To cite an instance: we have already told how devoted he was to the image of Sitarama but one day he heard someone vehemently denouncing marriage. So dismal was the picture that was painted, that the boy could not brook the idea that God could have anything to do with marriage. That very day he threw away the image of Sitarama, though it meant a great wrench and purchased a Shiva's image to lavish his devotion upon. Yet his respect for Rama and Sita never waned.

Endowed with all these virtues he entered the youth's estate. Possessed of a strong physique, a sharp intellect and overflowing energy he engaged himself in various games and studies. But the vigour of the spiritual undercurrent continued to gain ground imperceptibly. Many temptations came in the form of marriage proposals from outside and pictures of a luxurious life in the form of visions from inside. As he lay down to sleep two dissimilar visions appeared before his mind's eye: 'one, of the life of ease, comfort, luxury, opulence and sense-enjoyment, with a loving wife — the other that of a sannyasin, a wandering monk, immersed in the thoughts of the Divine Reality, depending on God for everything, with sky for the roof, the grass for the bed and food what chance may bring.' But like the Naciketas of the Upanishads who discarded the offer of the pleasures of a long life, a big kingdom, divine damsels, immense wealth to choose nothing but Brahma Vidya, Narendra's inner nature too spurned the life of ease and comfort and chose the path of renunciation.

The indefatigable energy at his disposal he used for the study of Western Logic and Philosophy, Indian Music, histories of nations, apart from the prescribed college curriculum. However, Western Logic and Philosophy appealed to him most. He read a great many treatises on these by different authors such as Kant, Hegel and Herbert Spencer. Their rationalistic approach to God and religion interested him. His mind from now on could not accept anything as true unless it conformed to reason and many a time doubts arose in his mind as to the very existence of God. A tussle between the innate nature and the doubting mind ensued. He was baffled and eagerly sought help to get out of the quandary. He attended the meetings of Keshab Chandra Sen, joined the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj but not one could give him lasting solace. One day in great agony of heart he went to Maharshi Devendranath Tagore and asked him the question, 'Sir, have you seen God?' Maharshi could not give a satisfactory answer. Narendra was sadly disappointed, for he had approached the Maharshi with great hope as the latter was considered at that time to be one of the spiritual luminaries of Calcutta. If Maharshi could not solve his problem, who else could do it for him?

It was at this juncture that he remembered what he had heard about Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa of Dakshineswar. With a heavy heart and a seething brain, like one with one's head on fire rushes to a lake (*deepta shira jalarashimiva*) Narendra sought Sri Ramakrishna. He repeated the question 'Sir, have you seen God?' to Sri Ramakrishna too. Straight came the reply from the Master, 'Yes, my boy', said he, 'I see Him as I see you but in a much more intense manner. Anyone who earnestly and sincerely seeks Him will find Him, but alas who wants God!' Narendra was besides himself with joy that he at last had found one who could say by personal experience that God existed. He was glad that what he cherished so dearly so long was not an idle myth. His doubts melted but he did not accept the Master *in toto* immediately. He repeated his visits to Sri Ramakrishna and tested and verified him and then only accepted him. Sri Ramakrishna like a kind mother guided Narendra in his spiritual quest but not before he too put Narendra to severe tests. Sri Ramakrishna praised him before all even

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when he was present. Any other person would have become puffed up with pride at such praise coming from the lips of a personage like Sri Ramakrishna. But with Narendra praise and blame were equal. He remonstrated with the Master for attributing to him virtues and capacities which, he considered, he did not possess, but when this too failed to silence the Master he retired from the place.

Again a time came when the same Paramahamsa, who loved Narendra so much as to pine in anguish at his prolonged absence, would turn away from Narendra. Even on Narendra's repeated visits he maintained this attitude of apathy and neglect. At last Sri Ramakrishna asked Narendra why he was continuing his visits in spite of his being neglected. Charming was the reply: 'It is not just your words that attract me. I love you and need to see you.' The Master who was testing him was immensely pleased. So high was the plane to which Narendra had reached and such was the acid test he was subjected to by the Master. Sri Krishna describes this kind of state as the attitude of the renouncer or the highest type of bhakta.[3] Whom else could the Master have chosen than such a one for the dissemination of his message in the world? Such a high state, however, is not attainable unless one possessed an immaculate character and that is why at a later date when some calumnious reports regarding Narendra reached the Master's ears he not only refused to believe them but severely upbraided the tale bearers. He said: 'Mother has showed me that Narendra can never fall a prey to temptations.' So confident was the Master of Narendra's purity and power to destroy all impurities that he never hesitated to feed him with food brought by persons of questionable income.

Circumstances changed with the death of his father. The days of affluence passed away, yielding place to penury. But his faith in God and resolution to renounce never faltered. It was while he was studying in the B.A. class that his father suddenly passed away leaving behind debts and a family of five to be taken care of. Narendra was cast suddenly from plenitude and luxury into poverty and privations. He stood all the onslaughts of distress manfully, suffering silently, sacrificing his physical needs of food and rest for the sake of the other members of the family. He knocked about from door to door in search of a job, yet never allowed any of his rich friends know of his condition; putting on a gay appearance he moved with them as before. The creditors began to prowl round the doors like hungry wolves and the relatives who received unstinted aid from his father instituted a law suit claiming the major portion of even the dwelling place, the only property left. Yet never for once did he lose confidence in himself, nor did he waver in his purpose. Referring to these days Swami Vivekananda later on said: "A rich woman sent me an ugly proposal to end my days of penury which I sternly rejected with scorn. Another woman made similar overtures to me. I said to her, 'You have wasted your life seeking the pleasures of the flesh. The dark shadows of death are before you. Have you done anything to face that? Give up all these filthy desires and remember God.'" Who but an all renouncing monk could have spoken in this strain when faced with utter starvation of the whole family? Who else can be conscious of God and the transitoriness of the world when faced with the hard realities of life, but a monk of the highest calibre?

Narendra was seized with an intense longing for God when the Master lay sick in Cossipore. He came running all the way from Calcutta unmindful of what or who were passing him in the streets, unaware of the state of his body or shoes like one mad he rushed to Sri Ramakrishna. Speaking about it Narendra said to 'M' (the author of the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna): 'As I tried to read I was seized with a great fear as if studying were a terrible thing. My heart struggled within me. I burst into tears. I never wept so bitterly

[3] समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च तथा मानापमानयोः। *Gita XII. 18.*

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in my life. I left my books and ran away. I ran along the streets. My shoes slipped from my feet. I didn't know where. I ran past a haystack and got hay all over me. I kept on running along the road to Cossipore.'

The pinnacle of realisation according to Vedanta is *Brahma sakshatkara,* realization of Brahman and that is obtained in the *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* : an absorption into the Absolute Existence, Knowledge, Bliss, where there is no other thing ; where the experiencer the experienced and the exprience are one. Narendra desired it with an intense passion. When questioned by the Master what he desired he said that he wanted to live absorbed in *samadhi* and come down to the plane of normal consciousness once in two or three days to take some food. Sri Ramakrishna, however, chided him, 'I did not know that you were of so small a mind. You should be like a banyan tree under which the weary travellers of this world may take shelter. Give up this small mindedness.' Yet Naren's desire to attain the Highest did not damp down, he intensified his practices and one day in Cossipore he was crowned with the experience of that bliss. 'You have now had the taste of the highest bliss but you have to do the Mother's work. Until then the key shall lie with me,' said Sri Ramakrishna to Narendra on this occasion.

The Master entered into *mahasamadhi* leaving the young disciples in the charge of Narendranath. He had commanded Narendra to see that the young boys did not return to the world again. Hemmed in as he was, by pecuniary difficulties and law-suits in his own family, he collected the young boys who had temporarily gone home and infused in them the fire of renunciation in ever so many ways. He would speak of the Master and his love for hours on end and bring to their memory vividly the days of bliss that they had passed in Sri Ramakrishna's company. They were charmed to see the detachment he could practise even in the midst of the stormiest days of his life. Such was his inner life that the outer storms failed to make any impression on his mind.

And when the storm that had arisen in the form of family law-suit and the like had died down, an intense desire to live the life of a free wandering monk, unattached, unencumbered and unconcerned, arose in his mind. With no possessions save a staff, a kamandalu (water pot) and one or two books he proceeded on his itineracy in the fashion of the ancient monks, living on what chance brought. In Vrindavan he felt as if the flood-gates of his heart were suddenly opened. The holy place with the association of Sri Krishna and His divine consort Radha awakened in him a devotional outburst. He began visiting all places connected with their life. Once while making a circuit of the Govardhan hill he vowed not to ask for alms but to accept whatever was voluntarily offered. He wanted to test his faith in God. By noon-time he was exceedingly hungry and to add to his discomfort it rained heavily. Exhausted though he was, he still plodded on. He heard someone calling from behind but Vivekananda did not stop, the man came nearer and nearer calling out that he had brought food for him but he stopped not. To test this act of Providence he ran as fast as he could but the man ran behind him all the while and overtook him after running a mile and insisted on his taking food. Tears burst forth from Vivekananda's eyes at the Lord's care of the devotee.

We have a distinct picture of the ancient mode of spreading religion by the sadhus when we see Swami Vivekananda in Hathras. Swamiji had alighted at the station and was sitting on the platform. The station master, Sarat Chandra Gupta noticed the Swami and the halo that surrounded him, made kindly inquiries whether he could be of any service to him. Coming to know that Swamiji was hungry he took him to his quarters and fed him. Swamiji stayed at Hathras for some days during which time there gathered round him the whole Bengali population of that place. Every evening the young and the old, the learned and the ignorant came to him

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shedding all prestige of age and scholarship to hear him speak on religion. But he was not to be contained in a small town. Observing that the people were getting attached to him he left Hathras to go to Hrishikesh, at the foot of the Himalayas, to lead a life of intense meditation. He lived there for some time, but his disciple Sarat Chandra Gupta who had turned a monk and followed him fell ill and this made him leave the place.

With his brother disciples too he travelled far into the Himalayas but he found that even their company was developing into a sort of attachment to them. He cut himself off from them too and travelled alone. Amazing were the experiences of the Swami during these wanderings. We cite one instance to show his forbearance and dependence on God. He was travelling in a train and as he possessed nothing except a third-class ticket he was starving a whole day. A Baniya, (a trader) a co-traveller, who did not believe in the life of renunciation coming to know of his condition made merry at the Swami's expense. Next day at noon both of them alighted at Tari Ghat station. The Baniya wanted to push home the insult and so sat in front of him in the shade and began to eat food while keeping up his derisive talk while the Swami sat in the sun. The Swami was unperturbed. There was not a trace of annoyance on his face. But all too sudden the jeers of the Baniya died away when an unknown local inhabitant brought a bundle of fresh food, cool water and insisted on feeding the Swami saying that it was Shri Ramji (the Lord Himself) who had appeared to him in his dream and sent him there with specific instructions to feed the Swami. Swamiji's eyes filled with tears of gratitude at the grace the Lord was showering on His devotee. He thanked the person profusely. The Baniya recognised his mistake begged Swamiji's pardon and took the dust of his feet.

Swami Vivekananda moved with all. Barriers of castes and class did not touch him. They melted before him like snow at the rise of the sun. He smoked from the chillum of a bhangi (sweeper), ate in the houses of devout Muhammedans, stayed with princes as well as peasants. His wanderings brought him in contact with a variety of people as also with the real state of affairs of the country. He saw dirt and squalor, poverty and ignorance everywhere. His heart began to burn with a desire for doing something to relieve the masses of their poverty. When he reached the 'end of the land,' Kanya Kumari, at the end of his perambulations, he was as if dying to find ways and means to solve this problem. In his search for a place of solitude he swam across the sea to a nearby rock and prayed incessantly to the Lord for light. He spent three days there in meditation at the end of which he was blessed with a vision as to the future course of his action.

He had tried to awaken the interest of the princes whom he had met, in the uplift of the masses but they did not evince much earnestness. He had heard about the convening of the Parliament of Religions at Chicago and thought it the best medium to introduce to the New World the message of the Old and create interest of those people in India. His vision at Kanya Kumari encouraged him and the permission of the Holy Mother emboldened him.

Armed thus with nothing but faith in the Divine message of the Master, and the blessings of the Holy Mother he launched forth into a strange land with no credentials or acquaintances and with very little money. He came months ahead of the opening of the Parliament at Chicago, but it was a costly city, the meagre means at his disposal would soon dry up if he lived there a few days more. He heard life in Boston was cheaper and so took the train toward it. Here Providence came to his rescue. In the train an elderly lady took interest in him, invited him to stay at her house in Boston. She introduced him to many of her friends among whom was the Hellenist scholar Prof. J. H. Wright of the Harvard University. Impressed by the Swami's profound scholarship the Professor gave a letter of introduction to the chairman of the

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Committee on the selection of delegates and a ticket to Chicago. The Swami lost the address of the person to whom he was to apply for accommodation. When therefore, he alighted at the station he knew not where to turn for help. Night was approaching. Swamiji tried to find out on his own by enquiring with the people but he could not make them understand what he said as it was the quarter where Germans lived. At last resting his faith in God he took shelter in an empty box in a nearby freightyard and went to sleep free of anxiety.

A short walk from the station next morning brought him to the most fashionable residential quarters in Chicago, where millionaires lived. He was extremely hungry and without any means. He started begging from house to house asking for food like a true Sannyasin that he was. The experience however was bitter, his soiled clothes and travel-worn appearance went against him ; at some places he was rudly treated, at others insulted and at still others the servants shut the door in his face. At length exhausted he sat down quietly on the roadside waiting for the Lord to do His will. Again Providence in which he fully put his trust sent him help. 'A regal looking woman', say the chroniclers of his biography, 'descended from a fashionable mansion and accosted him in a soft voice.' Hearing of his difficulties she took him into her house and after the Swami had his breakfast, herself took him to the offices of the Parliament of Religions. Thus was he ushered into that Assembly.

Swami Vivekananda made history that day by his brief yet heartfelt address. The assembly stood as one man to cheer him. But was the Swami elated, nay he was depressed, that night the royal arrangements that were made for his stay brought tears to his eyes. He wept for the poverty stricken millions of India in that hour of his triumph. Such was the inner life of Vivekananda, like the needle of the compass it never failed to keep on pointing towards the goal.

We have tried herein to give only a few incidents of his life which more than bring out the steady spiritual current that was flowing through Swami Vivekananda. He was a Sannyasin first and on that basis were built all his works, all his preaching. He said the great heritage of India was renunciation and service. 'Strengthen her in these and India will rise again to much greater heights of glory than it has ever been in the past.' Let us try to carry out this command and let him give us strength of mind and physique to be his worthy followers.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND THE MAHARAJA OF KHETRI

SWAMI SUDDHASATWANANDA

For a long time I had been cherishing the desire to visit Khetri as Khetri and its worthy ruler Maharaja Ajit Singh were so closely connected with the life of Swami Vivekananda.

The opportunity came in November last while I was at Delhi. Swami Ranganathanandaji, the Head of the Ramakrishna Mission at Delhi, was invited to address the staff and the students of the Birla Engineering and other Colleges at Pilani. The Kulapati of the Birla Educational Trust sent a car to take Swami Ranganathanandaji and being invited by the latter to accompany him, we started for Pilani which is one hundred and twenty miles away from Delhi. I felt special attraction to accompany the Swami when I was told that he would go to Khetri from Pilani. Khetri is only thirty miles away from Pilani. There is regular bus service between Delhi and Pilani and from Pilani to Khetri.

Khetri was a small native State in Rajputana, ninety miles away from Jaipur and the Maha-

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raja of Jaipur exerted much influence over Khetri. Though small, it was a very progressive State and its ruler had a broad outlook and the condition of the State and its people was much improved after the Maharaja came in contact with Swami Vivekananda and became his ardent and devoted disciple. They met first at Mt. Abu. It was in April 1891, that Swami Vivekananda, then known as Swami Vividishananda, was staying in a forlorn cave in Mt. Abu. A Muslim vakil of a native prince met Swamiji in his cave and was very much struck by his vast erudition and majestic and saintly appearance. At his request, Swamiji shifted to the vakil's house where the vakil was living alone.

Within a few days, Swamiji's name spread among the educated society of Mt. Abu and one Munshi Jagmohanlal, the Private Secretary of the Maharaja of Khetri came to the Bungalow to meet Swamiji. The first question that Munshi Jagmohanlal put to him was, 'Well Swamiji, how is it that you being a Hindu monk, are living with a Mussalman? Your food must have been touched by him!' Swamiji flared up at this question and said,

> 'Sir, I am a Sannyasin and am above all your social conventions. I can dine even with a Bhangi (Scavenger). I am not afraid of God, because He sanctions it. I am not afraid of the scriptures because they allow it, but I am afraid of you people and your society. You know nothing of God and scriptures . . .'

Jagmohanlal was greatly impressed with the reply and as he felt some divine fire shining about Swamiji, he invited him to go to Khetri-house at Mt. Abu to meet the Maharaja of Khetri. Swamiji promised to go after two days, but when the Maharaja heard about Swamiji, he became very anxious to see him and said, 'I will myself go to see him.' When Swamiji heard this, he instantly went to the palace where he was warmly received by the Maharaja. After the usual formalities His Highness asked him, 'Swamiji, what is life?' Swamiji replied, 'Life is the unfoldment and development of a being under circumstances tending to press it down.' The Maharaja put a number of questions each of which was aptly and convincingly answered by Swamiji which impressed the Maharaja much.

They met on subsequent days and the Maharaja requested Swamiji to accompany him to his palace at Khetri to which Swamiji agreed and they met at Jaipur and travelled the distance of ninety miles from Jaipur to Khetri in a State carriage. At the earnest request of the Maharaja, Swamiji initiated him and what a wonderful disciple he became! As a true disciple, after prostration he would sit kneeling in reverence before Swamiji and affection and blessing would spontaneously pour forth from the Guru's heart for his worthy disciple. As days passed by the relation between the Guru and the disciple became more and more intimate.

The Maharaja put a number of questions on various subjects in the course of his conversations and Swamiji without showing any disgust, replied to them and cleared all his doubts. No expression is adequate to paint the deep devotion of the Maharaja to his beloved Guru. So great was his reverence for his Guru, that while Swamiji would be asleep, he would serve him by gently massaging his feet. But Swamiji never allowed him to do so before others lest it should lower the dignity of the Maharaja in the eyes of his subjects.

Thus, the great teaching of Lord Krishna viz., तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया (*Gita* IV. 34), 'know that by prostrating thyself, by questions and by service,' was followed to the letter by the Maharaja and Swamiji as a true तत्त्वदर्शी (Knower of Truth) instructed him in the knowledge of the Supreme. The disciple had a very sharp intellect and through the grace of Swamiji, he became a worthy recipient of the instructions that he had so affectionately imparted to him.

Swamiji also encouraged the Maharaja to take an active interest in Scientific Study, urging upon him the country's need for training in Science and Technology. He himself taught the Maharaja some branches of science and at his instance the Maharaja established

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one observatory above his palace. A small Physical Laboratory was also opened. Swamiji taught him Law also. One day the Maharaja asked him, "Swamiji, what is Law?" Promptly came the reply, 'Law is altogether internal. It does not exist outside, it is a phenomenon of intelligence and experience. . . .'

Swamiji was introduced to Pandit Narayandasji Sharma who was the Court Pandit of the Maharaja, an erudite scholar in Sanskrit and a master of many of the scriptures. Swamiji was very much pleased to see his erudition and studied under him the Ashtadhyayi Mahabhasya, Patanjali's great commentary on the Sutras of Panini, and some other scriptures.

The Pandit was very much pleased to have Swamiji as a student and after the first day's study said, 'Swamiji, it is not often that one meets a pupil like you.' The Pandit who was simply charmed to see the wonderful memory and unique power of understanding of Swamiji said to him after sometime, 'Swamiji, there is nothing more to teach you. I have taught you all that I know and you have thoroughly absorbed them.' Swamiji showed due respect to his teacher and respectfully thanked him for his kindness and inquired about him even from distant America referring to him as 'my teacher'.

One nice incident took place during Swamiji's stay at Khetri. One evening during the hot season, when the sun had just set and the nature was becoming calm and serene with the advent of darkness, the Maharaja went to his garden-house with his friends. All of a sudden he remembered Swamiji and sent word to him requesting him to come to the garden-house. After Swamiji had come, discussion arose about some religious matters when a batch of dancing girls came and bowed down before the Maharaja. One of the dancers, who was a good songstress and had a sweet and enchanting voice, asked permission of the Maharaja to allow her to sing a song. When she was going to start the song, Swamiji got up from his seat and wanted to go to his residence. At this the songstress prayed to Swamiji with folded hands saying, 'May your holiness be pleased to be seated. I desire to sing a Bhajana (Devotional song) and shall feel blessed if your holiness condescends to hear it.' She thought, because she was a dancing girl, Swamiji was leaving the place and it had hurt her very much and her sorrow and repentance manifested in her prayer. Maharaja also said to Swamiji, 'Everybody likes her Bhajana and therefore be pleased to hear her song.' Swamiji agreed and sat again with an inattentive mind. The girl started singing a Bhajana of the famous blind saint and poet Surdas. She poured forth all the devotion of her heart in the music and lost herself in it. The song reads as follows :

प्रभु मेरो अवगुण चित न धरो।
समदरसी है नाम तिहारो, अब मोहि पार करो॥

Swamiji himself translated the song into English and it runs thus :

O Lord, look not upon my evil qualities!
Thy name, O Lord, is same-sightedness,
One piece of iron is in the image in the temple
And another, the knife in the hand of the butcher,
But when they touch the philosopher's stone
Both alike turn to gold!
So, O Lord, look not upon my evil qualities!
One drop of water is in the sacred Jamuna
And another is foul in the ditch by the roadside,
But when they fall into the Ganga
Both alike become holy.
So, O Lord, look not upon my evil qualities!

The song was over. It created a very deep impression on the minds of the audience. Swamiji was completely absorbed and tears were flowing down from his eyes. He exclaimed, 'Oh, by singing this devotional music of a saint, this dancing girl has aroused in me the significance of the saying, "Everything in this world is Brahman".' Swamiji wrote, 'By hearing this song, the thought flashed in my mind that even now the difference that I am a sannyasin and she is a dancing girl has not vanished from me! It is so difficult to see Brahman in every being! . . .'

Addressing the girl Swamiji said, 'Mother, I have done injustice, please forgive me. I was going to leave this place out of disrespect

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for you, but hearing your wonderful song, full of devotion and pregnant with high meaning, my eyes are opened.' Thenceforward, Swamiji used to address that girl as mother and through his blessings, her life was changed. It was indeed a thrilling experience for those who were present on the occasion.

Very few know that the world famous name 'Vivekananda' was given to Swamiji by the Maharaja of Khetri. When Swamiji came to Khetri, he used to write his name as Vividishananda. Swamiji visited Khetri thrice and in all stayed there for about five months. During his first visit, one day while the Maharaja and Swamiji were sitting together, the former smilingly said, 'Swamiji, your name is difficult to pronounce and it is difficult to understand the meaning also without the help of a commentator. Moreover, your विविदिषा period is already over. विविदिषा means desire to know, but you have known everything and there is nothing left for you to know.' Swamiji was convinced of the reasonable argument of the Maharaja and asked him, 'Which name do you prefer to give me?' Maharaja replied, 'According to my humble understanding, the most suitable name for you will be "Vivekananda".' Swamiji complied with the desire of his devoted disciple and thenceforward started signing his name as Vivekananda. The above fact shows, how much regard the Maharaja cherished for Swamiji, how well he understood him and what a great affection Swamiji had for his worthy disciple.

After spending a few months in great joy at Khetri, Swamiji left for Gujerat *via* Jaipur and from Gujerat he came to the South.

Maharaja Ajit Singh had no son and that was a sore point in his heart. He was sometimes troubled to think as to who would succeed him. One day, being unable to suppress his sorrow, he prayed to Swamiji to bless him with a son as he firmly believed that Swamiji could grant him any boon. Being moved by his sorrow Swamiji blessed the prince and in course of time, to his great satisfaction and relief, a son was born to the Maharaja. A big festival was arranged to rejoice at the birth of the royal son. The Maharaja remembered his beloved Guru without whose presence, he thought, the festivity would lose much of its charm. So, he at once sent Munshi Jagmohanlal all the way to Madras where the Munshi with great difficulty found him out. He expressed the ardent desire and humble prayer of the Maharaja to take Swamiji to Khetri on that auspicious occasion and bless the newborn babe. Though Swamiji was making preparations to go to America to attend the Parliament of Religions, he could not refuse the earnest request and loving invitation of the Maharaja. Swamiji loved the Prince very dearly. He wrote once to the Diwan of Junagad, '. . . you may also remember that between H. H. of Khetri and myself, there are the closest ties of love . . .' When Swamiji came to Khetri, he saw the whole city beautifully decorated. Singing, dancing and music were going on everywhere. The Maharaja who was at the State barge surrounded by State guests and Chiefs of Rajputana, prostrated himself before Swamiji, conducted him to the most honoured seat and introducing him to the respectable guests, had no hesitation to make them know that the son was born to him through the blessings of Swamiji. The baby was brought and heartily blessed by the Swami.

After some days, the Maharaja accompanied Swamiji upto Jaipur and asked his Private Secretary to accompany Swamiji upto Bombay, pay all his travelling expenses upto his destination and provide him with suitable dress and everything necessary for his voyage. Thus the Maharaja had the unique privilege to bear all the expenses of Swamiji's great and historic mission to the West. Swamiji left Bombay for America on 31st May, 1893.

The small amounts that were collected at Madras by Swamiji's devotees and admirers there for his going to America, were distributed among the poor people according to the wishes of Swamiji. It was at Khetri that Swamiji was taught how to tie the Pagri (turban).

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Swami Vivekananda delivered six memorable lectures at the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago in September 1893. When the news of his unique success reached the ears of the Maharaja, he convened a special Durbar and passed a resolution heartily congratulating Swamiji on his wonderful achievement. The deep love and appreciation of the Maharaja and his people, their sense of great pride and joy and their feeling of gratefulness, were evident in every word of the resolution which was sent to Swamiji.

It is said that Swamiji had sent a Phonograph record to the Maharaja embodying his message to him as to how he should govern his kingdom and take care of his subjects. Swamiji's speech was recorded there in Hindi. Unfortunately, there is no trace of the record, otherwise we would have been fortunate enough to hear Swamiji's voice even today.

Swamiji wrote several letters to the Maharaja from America which were full of inspiring messages and which spoke of the intense love and appreciation that Swamiji had for him.

As a result of Swamiji's successful preaching and convincing exposition, the banner of Vedanta fluttered high in the United States. Swamiji returned to India in 1897 where unprecedented and spontaneous welcome greeted him everywhere. Maharaja Ajit Singh sent his Private Secretary to Madras to accord him a hearty welcome and to invite him to Khetri. When Swamiji was approaching Khetri, the Maharaja went eighteen miles in advance to welcome him in person and brought him to his palace in a State carriage drawn by six horses. The whole city wore a festive appearance and was eager to accord a royal reception to Swamiji. A big meeting was arranged at the local high school to welcome both Swamiji and the Maharaja who had also returned a few days back from his European tour.

First Swamiji presented on behalf of the Ramakrishna Order, an address of welcome to the Maharaja to which the Maharaja gave a fitting reply promising to do his best to serve his people by starting hospitals and dispensaries and educational institutions for the subjects. After his speech, Swamiji who was given welcome addresses by several organisations and friends said amidst thunderous cheers,

> *'....What little I have done for the improvement of India, would not have been done, if Rajaji had not met me.'*

This one utterance of Swamiji apart from numerous others, clearly shows, how the Maharaja was dear to Swamiji and how he helped Swamiji to fulfil his great mission.

In fact, the first activity of the Ramakrishna Mission was started in Khetri by Swami Akhandananda, a brother disciple of Swami Vivekananda, at the instance of the latter. Swami Vivekananda wrote in 1894 to Swami Akhandananda, who was staying at Khetri then,

> 'Go from door to door, amongst the poor and lower classes of the town of Khetri and teach them religion. . . . You must give your body, mind and speech to "the welfare of the world". You have read मातृ देवो भव पितृ देवो भव — "Look upon your mother as God look upon your father as God", — but I say, दरिद्र देवो भव मूर्ख देवो भव — the poor, the illiterate, the ignorant, the afflicted — let these be your God. Know that service to these alone is the highest religion.'

With the generous help and full support of the Maharaja, Swami Akhandananda started a high school and some other philanthropic institutions there. The Maharaja took Swamiji's advice as a sacred command and tried his best to follow it. The Maharaja showed his sincere love and regard to Swamiji by arranging to remit rupees one hundred to Swamiji's mother every month, when he came to know that she was in financial difficulty. Even after the passing away of the Maharaja and Swamiji, the same amount was being regularly sent to Swamiji's mother from the Khetri Treasury as long as she was alive.

Really the meeting between the Maharaja Ajit Singh and Swami Vivekananda was a historic one. The reader will easily realise how the ruler of a small state in Rajputana,

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welcomed and heartily accepted the patriotic and universal ideal of Swami Vivekananda and gave all help and support to translate it into action. Swamiji in his turn fully appreciated the greatness of this noble son of Rajputana as will be evident from the following poem which Swamiji himself composed and sent to the Rajaji Bahadur of Khetri.

HOLD ON YET A WHILE, BRAVE HEART

If the sun by the cloud is hidden a bit,
If the welkin shows but gloom,
Still hold on yet a while, brave heart!
The victory is sure to come.

No winter was but summer came behind,
Each hollow crests the wave,
They push each other in light and shade;
Be steady then and brave.

The duties of life are sore indeed,
And its pleasures fleeting vain,
The goal so shadowy seems and dim,
Yet plod on through the dark, brave heart,
With all thy might and main.

Not a work will be lost, no struggle vain,
Though hopes be blighted, powers gone;
Of thy loins shall come the heirs to all,
Then hold on yet a while, brave soul,
No good is e'er undone.

Though the good and the wise in life are few,
Yet theirs are the reins to lead,
The masses know but late the worth,
Heed none and gently guide.

With thee are those who see afar,
With thee is the Lord of might,
All blessings pour on thee great soul,
To thee may all come right.

Sometime ago, the present Maharaja of Khetri made a gift of a portion of the palace where Swami Vivekananda stayed, to the Ramakrishna Mission and a branch of the Mission has been started there. The room where Swami Vivekananda stayed has been converted into a shrine.

Sitting on that sacred spot in devoted silence for a while, we returned with our heart full of thoughts of Swamiji.

INDIA'S CONRIBUTION TO EDUCATION—II

V. N. SHARMA

Duration of Studies

The Indian Codes of Social Law (*Dharma Sastras*) enjoin as we have seen elsewhere the first twenty-five years of life to be devoted for studies either at home or under a teacher. But many Indian teachers consider this period too meagre to pass through the whole circle of knowledge indicated by that ancient word *trayi*, the all comprehensive *trinity* of sciences. In Manu's commands the ideal and full period of education is stated to be thirty-six years from the beginning to the end of residence with the teacher. The next best period, according to him is eighteen years, minimum is nine years or till the desired knowledge is acquired. 'After this period only a student is enjoined to take to the householder's life' (*Manu* III, I. IV. I : II. 164). According to Bodhayana the total duration of studentship is 12 years for each Veda, at least one year for each division thereof or 24, 36 or 49 years in all (*Bodha* 1, 2, 3). Vyasa agrees to this period (*Vyasa* 1. 41). According to the Upanishads, the minimum period of studentship is 24 years, middle 44 and the best is 48 years. Such 'ones who spend their time in this way for their studies would be bestowed with long life, health and good conduct and riches'. Thus 'he escapes from disease and becomes exempt from affliction' (*Chand. Upanishad* 3. 16). 'One should' according to Yajñavalkya 'lead the life of a student for 12 years or at least five years'. Gautama tells us that a student should spend 12 years for his studies or until the studies are thoroughly understood and mastered by him (*Gautama* III). Even though there is no agreement on this

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matter, all teachers and lawgivers have taken for granted that a pupil spends with his teacher such a period till he thoroughly masters his subjects attending upon his preceptor. It is not only a period of mere learning but a time of intense discipline. In some cases no teaching was given for several years (*Chand. Up.* IV. 10). As we have seen already during this period of probation the pupils had to work in the house and in the fields or attending to their master's sacred fires (*Chand.* IV. 10), looking after his cattle and collecting alms for him (*Chand.* IV. 3. 5). In some cases the students accompanied their masters and awaited his commands in his tours. The leisure time, left after performing the duties to the teacher, they devoted for studies (*Brihad. Up.* III. 1. 2).

A boy begins his search for Divine Life right from his entrance into this world. Shall I in the true Indian sense say that one never begins one's studies in this world only when he is born? He has already begun it and seen many lands and many people even before he came to this world in the physical form. Even when he entered his mother's womb, to settle down into this world as a resident, he had begun to acquaint himself with the nature of this world. Parents at home try to '*remember*' his previous connections with this world. To make firm his footing in this world once again, he passes through the ancient discipline of studentship, thus he brings about an understanding in himself in this physical organism with full consciousness.

As a member of this physical organism, a child begins his studies under a teacher at about seven years of age, entering upon the obligations and duties of studentship (Brahmacharya) and passing through all sacraments and ceremonies appertaining to his admission. In some cases children of some special temperaments, types and qualifications take up their education under the ancient Aryan Dharma at a later age. The ancient teacher emphasises on this difference and begins his instruction only when he knows that the child who comes to him is fully ready not only through mere outer physical development but in other spheres of his organism as well. In all the ancient texts, therefore, we find definite ages fixed for different classes and castes for their studies. A child of the Brahmana is in all cases considered normal since he, nine out of ten cases, begins his formal education right in his house under his parents through different sacraments, religious rites etc. The usual time for a Ksatriya (Warrior) child to begin his studies is 11 and for the Vysya (Merchant) 12 (*Chand. Up.* I. 2). Of course, there are some exceptional cases to the ancient rule and many gifted children from these classes as well could begin their studies much earlier than the prescribed age-limit.

A Day's Plan

Many instructions are preserved for us and they indicate how a student should begin his day's work and approach his teacher for study and meditation. The actual day's work begins normally in the following manner :

> 'A student having quitted his bed early in the morning and having bathed and performed the morning devotions (Sandhya and Homa) should accost self-controlled, his preceptor. Then having been commanded by his preceptor and having cast a look at his face he should commence the study of the Vedic Texts' (*Samkhya Samhita* III. 2-3).

Before he begins his studies he must put off his shoes (*Apastamba Samhita* IX. 20). This ancient system was adopted in the Buddhist schools as well and some information in this connection has been preserved for us by a Buddhist pilgrim who spent some years visiting different educational institutions of his time (673-693 A.D.). The method in some details is rather elaborate but very interesting. According to T-Tsing, 'Every morning the students having bathed, come to their teacher, make salutation touching his feet three times. Then they enquire of the teacher saying "let my teacher be attentive. I now make enquiries whether he has been well through the night, whether the body has been in perfect health, whether he is active and at ease, whether he digests his food well, whether he is ready for

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the morning meal". Then the teacher answers these enquiries concerning his health etc. Next the pupil goes to salute his seniors who are in the neighbouring apartments; afterwards he reads a portion of the scripture and reflects on what he has learnt' (*T Tsing*, pp. 116-117).

The study should commence in the last watch of the night (*Manu* IV. 99) after which the student was not to sleep again. After usual ablutions he, clad in a light garment, looking towards the north shall do *Achamana* (sipping water with due rites) and unite his palms in the manner of *Brahmanjali* (drawing up the hands a little in a fixed posture and then uniting the palm) and after which alone lessons should be given to him by the preceptor. The teacher then shall take hold of the small finger of the pupil's left hand and address him as follows: 'O, do you read now' (*Manu* II. 73; *Gautama* Ch. I). Thereupon the pupil should touch his eyes, ears and other parts of his body with a blade of Kusa grass and purify himself by practising three Pranayamas (regulation of breath in a particular manner). 'After this he shall become competent to begin his studies' (*Manu* II. 75). Then the student chants in company with others the ancient hymn 'May the Lord protect us (teacher and student). May we not dislike each other. May He maintain us both with brightness and success in all our efforts. May we grow vigorous. May our study prosper. May we not quarrel with each other' (*Taitt. Upa.* I. 11).

'At the beginning of each lesson the pupils embrace their teacher for blessing' (*Manu* II. 71; *Samvata Samhita* 86-10) touching the feet of their teacher and await his commands. The teacher then says '*Om*' and then begins his lessons. If there is anything that requires explanation the pupil says 'Sir' upon which the teacher explains to him. He then again says '*Om*'. In some cases we see that the teacher is enjoined to ask the pupil to begin, and from time to time, instruct him to understand before proceeding further and at the end of the study he should say 'Let us stop' (*Manu* II. 73). The word Manu has used in this connection is '*Adesha*' (instruct him to understand) and this corresponds to the modern 'Do you follow', 'Do you understand', 'Is my meaning clear'. In this manner they go on till they have finished a lecture or question which consists of the three verses. After the lesson is finished, they have all to repeat it once more and then go on learning it by heart, pronouncing every syllable, with distinct high accent. After the teacher has first given a lesson to his pupil on the right, another takes his place and this goes on till the whole lecture is finished — a lecture generally consisting of 60 questions. At the end of the last verse, the teacher says '*Om*' and the pupil replies '*Om*' repeating also the verses learnt. The pupil then embraces the feet of his teacher (*Vishnu.* 30. 32; *Manu* II. 71).

As the teacher recites the text, the student repeats after him. This is *adhyayana* and is enjoined by the ancient texts. This should be done until the text is learnt by heart. It is intended to impart efficiency (*samskara*) and thus be made fit for wider sphere of studies.

In some cases the teacher gives a talk on the general idea of the subject he would be introducing for study for the day, either at the commencement or at the end of the lecture. This is illustrated by a well known story about the sage Vyasa, who had four disciples — Vaisampayana, Sumanta, Paila and Jaimini. To each of them he explained the comprehensive view of the texts he wanted to teach. In some instances a lesson was followed by instruction (*vidhi*) and explanation (*artha vada*). In *vidhi* the teacher showed to the pupils the acts and actions to be actually performed during a sacred ritual described in the text, and in *artha vada* the meaning of the sentences was made clear. Teachers are not satisfied with mere recitation and reading but demand more than this. They encourage study by the students and a particular time is set apart for this. When the students are alone they read among themselves the texts they had learnt from their teacher and reflect on the meaning of what they learnt (*Yaska*: *Nirukta* I. 18). In other words the student gains three

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methods in this way of study (*sruta*) thought (*cinta*) meditation and contemplation (*bhavana*). Day by day he goes on in this way in his search for knowledge 'without loosing a minute'. This ancient method is followed even today in many parts of India by the scholars of ancient culture; thus the ancient tradition is kept up without any break.

It is taken for granted that there must be complete harmony and friendly atmosphere between the teacher and students in all spheres of their studies, meditations and other activities. In many cases both in the Epics as well in the Upanishadic texts, we hear of frequent prayers and invocations between them to bring about understanding and harmony, as well as concentration and right attitude during their work. All their studies are begun with them and ended with them (*Taitt. Up.* II. I).

The Buddhist schools go further: they are very strict in this matter as we see from the different texts and from the records of Chinese and Greek pilgrims.

> 'During the time devoted for the study the students are not allowed to speak or even to cough and much less to spit; and if any one offends any of these ways he is cast out from the community that very day, as being a man found wanting in self-restraint.' (Fragment from Magastanes).

Muslim schools follow the same method of disqualifying those who do not behave well during their contact with their teachers. There were fastings and prayers for such students who behaved not properly.

THE WORSHIP OF GAYATRI

M. V. SRIDATTA SARMA

श्रीविद्यामंत्रवोध्यां परमशिवमयीं अर्धनारीशरूपां ।
सृष्टव्यप्राणिकर्मानुगुणसमुदितां ब्रह्मणिस्पन्दशक्तिं ।
गायत्री प्रातरीड्या सवितुरथकला मध्यभागेदिनेया ।
सायं सारस्वतीति त्रिपुरमनुगतां योगवश्यां प्रपद्ये ॥

> 'I adore that Being, who is intelligible to the sacred formula enunciated in Srividya and who is completely made up of that most excellent Lord Siva (Vedas), assuming a form which is made up of two equal parts (male and female), who is the pulsating force with the Creator in the cause of projection of sentient beings in accordance with the actions performed (in their former lives), who is glorified as Gayatri at dawn, who appears in dazzling form as Savitri while the Sun moves in his triumphant car at noon and who at the termination of the day enters into the three cities (Tripura) as Saraswati, being fascinated by Yoga.'

The term Gayatri applies to the most sacred hymn of the Vedas repeated daily at the time of devotion (the three sandhyas: morning, midday and evening). By a pious repetition of this verse which contains twenty-four syllables in the meter of the same name, great sins are expiated.

The first day of the waning moon in the month of Sravana is held sacred to Gayatri, the Supreme Spirit presiding over Brahma Jnana. On this day it is usual to offer special prayers to Savitar at the time of the morning glow, which symbolises or indicates the inner illumination aspired for by the student of Vedic studies. The Gayatri pratipat is observed after the performance of the Upakarma.[1]

[1] According to *Yajnavalkya Smrti*, the *Upakarma* is a ceremony performed before commencing the reading of the Vedas after the monsoons (*Sravani*). *adhyayanamupakarma sravanyam sravanena va, hastenoushadhi bhave va panchamyam sravanasya tu.*

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In Vedic lore, Surya, Savitar, Vishnu, Pushan and Mitra are different names for the Sun; but they indicate different phases. According to Sri Sankaracharya, Savita denotes the supreme cyclic movement power or the First Cause which directs the 'whirling round' of the gross world in the three stages like projection, continuation and dissolution — a distinctive characteristic of matter possessing name and form (*Savituriti ṣṛstisthiti laya laksaṇasya samasta dwaita vibhramasya adhiṣṭhânam lakṣyate*). Another definition of the word is that which possesses the power of supremacy over the aggregate of all created things i.e. the world. (*Sunoti sooyate vâ utpâdayati carâcaram jagat savitâ*).

Now coming to Sandhya oblations, it is said by the sage Vedavyasa thus: 'The Dwijas should investigate or search after that form of Sun by meditation.' (*Anusandhyâmupâseeta sandhyâroopam ravim dwijah*). In *Soubhagya Bhaskara Bhashya,* Sandhya is defined thus: 'The conception of that individual form of intelligence (Spirit) as characterised by Aditya (Sun) may be said (held) to be Sandhya. Therefore, this term applies to that intervening time considered as divinity.'[2] The Srutis specifically declare that one who adores Sandhya really meditates on the Absolute. (*Yah sandhyâmupâsate brahmaiva tadupâsate*).

In *Vasista Smrti,* Sandhya is described thus: 'That Sandhya is the source of the Universe. It is that spotless form overstepping illusion. It is the sole powerful energy sprung out of the three constituents. The wise one should therefore mutter prayers after contemplating on Savitri, who rests on the orb of the Sun.'[3]

The Sandhya hymn is known as Gayatri, because it protects him, who sings it, as opined by Vyasa: (*Gâyantam trâyate asmâd gâyatriyam tatah smṛtaḥ*). The word Gâyatri may also indicate that this hymn praises the gods. (*Gâyatri gâyate stutikarmaṇah*) or that it sprung from Brahma while chanting the Vedic hymns (*Gâyato mukhâdudapadatiti ha brâhmaṇam*). Gayatri serves as the symbol of all that is. It is the golden hymn. Krishna Bhikshu calls it *mantra râja.* There is an adage that there can be no other mantra that is more exalted than the Gayatri (*Na gayatryâh param mantram*). Lord Krishna says that of all the verse forms, He is Gayatri (*Gâyatri Chandasâmaham*). According to the Devi Bhagavata, Gayatri is a name for that Supreme Spirit, presiding over the Sandhyas (*Yâ sandhyâ saiva gâyatri saccidânanda roopiṇi.* D.B. II-17).

According to a passage in the Chandogya Upanisad 'The Gayatri meter is every thing here that has come to be, whatsoever there is here. Verily the Gayatri is speech. Verily speech both sings (*gayati*) and protects (*trayate*) every thing that has come to be. (*Gayatri va idagm sarvam bhutam yadidam kinca. Vâgvai gâyatri vâgvâ idagm sarvam bhootam. Gâyati ca trâyate ca.* III-12-1). Verily what this gayatri is — that is the same as what this earth is; for in it every thing that has come to be is established.' (Ch. Up. Ch. III-Kh XII-2-3). According to another passage, from the same Upanisad, a description is given of Gayatri. 'That Gayatri has four feet and is sixfold. And this is also described by a Rik verse. Such is the greatness of it (of Brahman under the disguise of Gayatri); Greater than that is the Person (Purusha). His feet are all things. The immortal with three feet is in heaven (in Himself).'[4]

In the peace chant of the Rudra hymn (Krishna Yajurveda), Gayatri, the Spirit presiding over the knowledge of the Brahman in the form of a cow is invoked. She is the goddess of speech who invites the gods. She not only follows those who invoke Her, but

[2] *adityavachchinna chaitanyasya abheda bhavanam sandhyapadarthah, atha-eva sandhi kalopasya devataparo ayam sabdah.*

[3] *ya sandhya sa jagatsootirmayatita hi nishkala, isvari kevala saktistattvatrayasamudbhava. dhyatvarkamandalagatam savitrim vai japedbudhah.*

[4] *saisha catushpada sadvidha gayatri tadetadrachabhyanuktam. tavanasya mahima tatojyayanscha purushah, padosya sarvabhutani tripadasyamritam diviti.*

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also blesses them and sees that all evil is averted at the time of the recital of the hymns, which relate to the conduct of expiatory rites or benedictory prayers (*Krishna Yajurveda Samhita,* III-3-2-2).

In the Bṛhadaranyaka Upanisad, the mystical significance of the Gayatri hymn is explained (Ch. V. B. 14). In Aryan fold, the teacher imparts instructions to the pupil when he is eight years of age. He is made to repeat the Savitri verse word by word and by halves of lines until he is conversant with the whole. This method enables the pupil to learn from the teacher about prana, or life, which is the life or Self of the world. Says a passage from the same Upanisad thus : 'Thus does that Gayatri rest with the Self. That Gayatri protects the vital breaths ; the gayas are the pranas (vital breaths) and it protects them. And because it protects the vital breaths, therefore it is called Gayatri. And that Savitri verse which the teacher teaches, that is it (the life, the prana, and directly the Gayatri) and whomsoever he teaches, he protects his vital breaths.'

Gayatri is styled Vedamata (the mother of the Vedas). She is Adisakti and She is worshipped by all (*âdisaktim upâsante gâyatrim vedamâtaram*). Says a sloka from the Devi Bhagavata thus : 'She, who is worshipped during the Sandhyas (the three junctures of time) and whom even the Vedas praise eternally is therefore held to be *Vedopâsya* (one, who is the object of worship by the Vedas).'[5]

The origin of Gayatri is assigned to the pranava and the three mystic utterances '*Bhu, bhuvah,* and *svah*', which precede the twenty-four letters constituting the prayer. The twenty-four letters are interpreted to be the *Sankhya tattvas.* The Gayatri hymn consists only of three quarters as now in usage. The fourth quarter is the Supreme Spirit. (*Turiyam tu pâdam tasyâh pare brahmaṇi samsthitam*). In Chapter II of Gayatri Tantra, the mystical symbol *bhu* is described as symbolising the Bhuloka or earth. '*Bhuvah*' is the second of the three worlds, the one which is immediately above the earth. '*Svah*' represents the zone of the immortals (paradise). These utterances also denote the three saktis Iccha or desire, Kriya or activity and Jnana or consciousness. These are also identified with the centres of energy as propounded in the Yoga sastra viz., *Muladhara* (basic centre), situated at the lowest end of the spinal chord, Visuddha, the fifth lotus centre and Sahasrara, the peak point respectively. These are the three spots wherein Gayatri is centred.

Iconographic descriptions of Gayatri are available in the *Gayatri Kavacha,* which is part of Vasista Samhita. According to a Dhyanasloka, Gayatri possesses five faces or five shades perhaps to indicate the different colours of the Sun's rays from morning till evening, colour of the oyster pearl, coral red, golden erne representing the aureola surrounding the Sun's disc, blue sapphire and white. (*Muktâvidrumahema nîla dhavalacchâyairmukhaih*). She is adorned with the moon over the head. She is the very quintessence of Truth (*Tattvârthavarṇâtmikam*). Two of her hands are represented in the Varada and Abhaya poses or mudras (conferring boons and giving assurance of safety). The remaining hands are depicted as holding the goad, whip, spear, skull, conch, discus and a pair of lotuses.

According to the Savitripanjara Stotra, Gayatri is symbolical with a girl. She presides over the prayers offered at dawn. She is the mistress of Brahma and is of blood red colour, being seated on a swan. She represents the Rigveda. Savitri presides over the midday ablutions. She is described to be of white colour, possessing four hands in which are held the Varada and abhaya mudras, as also the skull and the rosary. She presides over Yajurveda and is a maiden in form. She is Rudrasakti, her vehicle being the bull. Saraswati is the presiding devata for the evening (twilight prayer). She is of dark colour (because night is approaching). She is depict-

[5] *brahmadayo'pi sandhyayam tam sandhyam japanti cha, veda japanti tam nityam vedopasya tatah smrita.* (*Devi Bhagavata*)

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ed as an old woman. She is Vaishnavi sakti, riding over the celestial eagle.

According to the Gayatryupanisad, Gayatri is associated with the path of action (*Karma marga*), while Savitri symbolises the path of knowledge (*Jnana marga*). Finally Sarasvati is a name for the path of liberation (*Moksa*). The Gayatrihridaya stotra assigns Gotras to the three forms. The Gayatri is assigned Samkhyayanasa Gotra, while Savitri is of Bharadvaja Gotra and Saraswati of Kasyapasa Gotra. The three forms also denote Agni, Vayu and Surya Tattvas, respectively. Says Yajnavalkya thus : 'At dawn, Gayatri assumes the form of Brahma ; at noon, She represents Rudra ; when the Sun sets, She functions as Vishnu and affords protection against distress.' [6]

[6] *pratarbrahmasvarupa madhyanhe rudra rupini. sayam vishnuswarupeyam gayatri trayate bhayat.*

The Gayatryupanisad gives the Phalasruti of the Gayatri Mahamantra thus : 'Those courageous men, who adore in the cavity of their lotus like bosoms that motionless (steady) Being in the form of letters, which is complete by itself, and is concealed or kept as a secret, forming into a single subtle whole which is undefiled (unspotted) and pure and constitutes the Reality (Truth) are indeed absolved from sins in this worldly existence.' [7]

'Let us meditate on that excellent glory of Savitar — that is on the earth, the sky, the heavens. May He stimulate our intellect.' (Rigveda : III-62-10. Also Sukla & Krishna Yajurveda and Samaveda.)

[7] *achalamachalavarnam varnarupam tamekam tvakhilamakhilaguhyam guhyamekam tu sookshmam, amalamamalatattvam ye bhajantiha dhira, hridaya kamalamadhye te bhavantiha muktah.*

ALAMBAZAR MATH

And the Inception of the Vow of Service

(Continued from the previous issue)

SWAMI AKHANDANANDA

Towards Berhampore

In villages like Napukur and Beldanga I found people suffering from drought and famine. My heart misgave me and at every step I felt a hesitation to say that God is merciful. I could not make out why little kids should die of starvation in the realm of a merciful God. My heart prompted me to leave this domain of such a kind God. I then determined that if in any village on my way I could get hold of a copy of *Yogavāsishtha Rāmāyana*, I would not leave the place before I had gone through it. At every village I passed through I looked for a copy of it.

From Dadpur I came to Napukur where I spent a night with a Brahman devotee, Janakinath Lahiri. In the moon-lit night I talked with Lahiri and his regard, his love for God and his dignified manners gave me satisfaction.

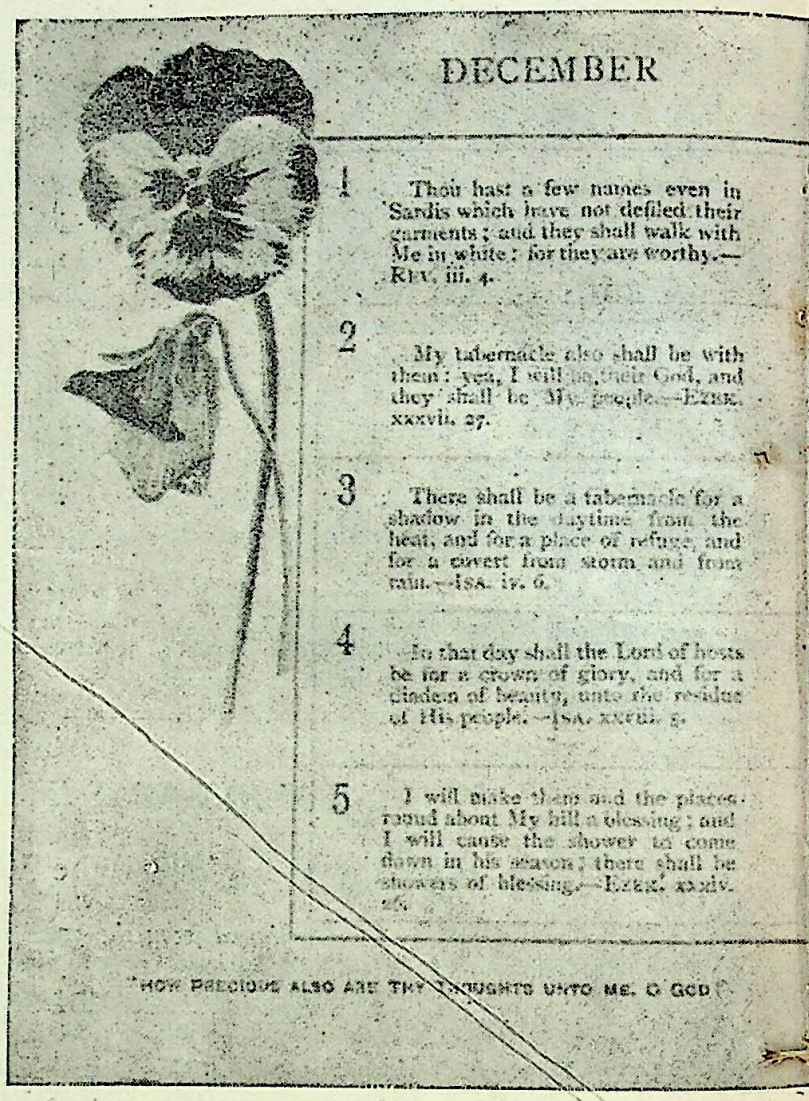
From him I came to know that the Babus of Jamserpur in Nadia were the zamindars of the village. On finding two stalwart wrestlers of Western India in such a small village I enquired of Lahiri why they were there. Lahiri said, 'A few days back the people oppressed by a tyrannical steward of the Babus pulled him out in the open field in the broad daylight of a noon and beat him to death. For fear of recurrence of such an event the Babus have placed here the two wrestlers.'

(*Continued on page* 398)

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Swami Vivekananda is thought to have spoken at a Vesper Service at the Unitarian Church in Lawrence, Massachusetts sometime after May, 1894, and to have spent the night in the home of the Unitarian minister, the Rev. George Henry Young.



As Mrs. Young and the eldest daughter, Anne, were away at the time, the second daughter, Sheila, was managing the household and taking care of the younger children, Eleanor and Philip.

Sheila remembers that Swamiji sat on her right at the breakfa the table from Eleanor and Philip.

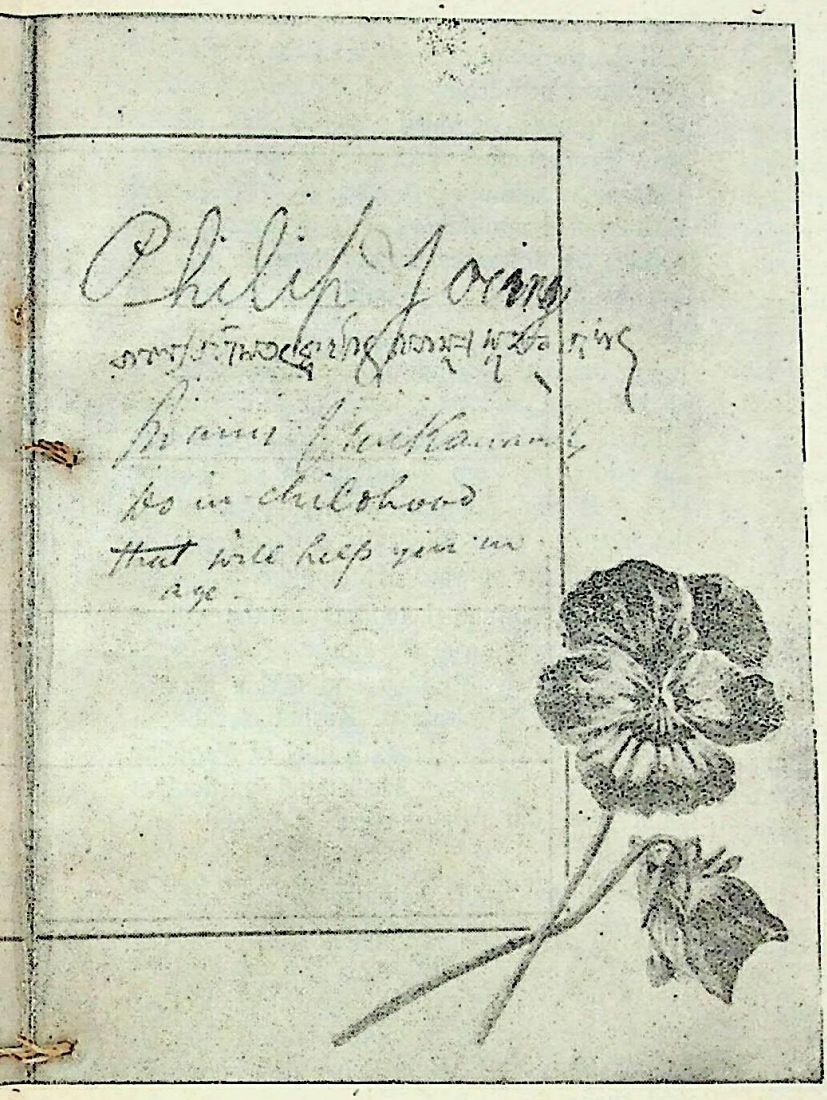
When the Swami left the table he went into the adjoining room. he took off his turban and showed the children how he wound it. great deal of cloth in it.

The Birthday Book in which Swamiji wrote, belonged to Eleanor. each day of the year. Beside each quotation is a space where friends sig

Sheila now lives in Saxonville, a suburb of Framingham, Mass., and

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fast table, between her father and her, across

There, as both Sheila and Eleanor remember,
. The turban was white, and there was a

It is a little book with a Bible quotation for
gn their name next to the date of their birthday.

d Eleanor (Mrs. Joseph Guild) in Dedham, Mass.

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(*Continued from page* 395)

At night some cultivators struck up a loud chorus. I could not make out the meaning of a single word in the piece. This was the first time that such a song reached my ears. On enquiry I came to know that like the Sanyasis of Gājan* in the month of Çhaitra in Calcutta and its suburbs, the peasants of the locality took a vow in the name of Nila and sang the village songs, called 'Bolan'. The peasants themselves compose such songs each year. I asked a boy to sing a bit of his 'Bolan' and he went on :

I eat mangoes, I eat berries
And throw the stones in the hedge ;
I have been in as many as seven Gajans
And now I beat a drum with a stick,
I beat a drum with a stick.

Next morning Lahiri requested me most earnestly to stay on a day more. So long as the Brahman was with me I could not leave. But as soon as he sat for his prayer I left the place with 'Durga Srihari' (Divine names) on my lips. But the eyes of the Brahman, glistening with tears, had so affected me that I was tempted to go back to him, but I came to Beldanga instead.

Beldanga

Beldanga is a big village. There is a market here, a weekly fair, a school, a post office and other things and it is thickly populated. There is also a silk factory. People of the district call it 'Bānak'. Maharani Swarnamoyee of Kasimbazar was the zamindar of the village. From our boyhood we heard of the open-handed charity of Maharani Swarnamoyee. But it was with great sorrow, I heard that because of the tyranny of her steward and other officers the tenants here had revolted and stopped payment of rent.

I was a guest for a day at a Brahman's house. I got a copy of *Vishnupurana* and began reading it. In the meantime a headman of the tenants of the village came and told me stories of oppression of the zamindar's people. I urged him not to go on quarrelling with a generous-minded zamindar like Maharani Swarnamoyee but to try an amicable settlement, adding, 'If you pick a quarrel with your zamindars and disregard their orders, the influence they still retain will be lost in the future. Would it add to your glory ?'

For my bath I came to the zamindar's office at Beldanga and saw there an old steward sitting. I did not exchange words with him but addressed from a distance a gate-keeper thus, 'If you continue your oppression of the tenants, there might be a recurrence of the fate of the steward of Napukur here too.'

Then the principal tenants of the village called me away from the house of my Brahman host to an assembly and taking me for a spy of the Maharaja of Kasimbazar began to revile me. Now Janaki Lahiri of Napukur came to my rescue. He stated particulars about me and they were ashamed and repentant.

The Brahman of Beldanga whose guest I was, told me that Berhampore was fourteen miles from there. Midway there was no village of upper class people. His elder brother was an assistant at a cloth-dealer's shop at Bhabta Bazar. I might have my noon-day meal there.

Bhābtā

On my way from Beldanga to Bhabta I saw under a tree some able-bodied famine-stricken men ; they were raising earth for a road. They were exchanging hot words with the overseer and sub-overseers of the District Board for stinting their payment.

I chanced upon them and took the brief for the labourers. This opened the eyes of the overseers. They paid the famine-stricken people their real due. Thus wherever I found injustice being done to the poor I strove for redress as best as I could.

* Gajan — a relic of decayed Buddhism. People of lower castes in Bengal in mid-April take a vow and go through various physical mortifications in the name of a god not included in orthodox Hindu pantheon. The people that take the vow are called Sanyasis and the god they worship is called Nila— Translator.

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Next I came to Bhabta and was taken in as a guest at the shop of that Brahman. The Ganga flows very near Bhabta market. I went to bathe there and chanced to meet the Headmaster of the long-established Primary school of Bhabta. He promised to give me copies of *Navyabharat* (a cultural Bengali monthly) to read. After my noonday meal I went to the primary school and read *Navyabharat* as I took rest.

In the afternoon many Brahman boys came to the teacher for their lessons. They had all come from the village of Mahula. Night came on as the teacher gave them lessons on various subjects. The teacher asked me not to venture to go to an unknown place at night; I should rather wait for the day. So I spent the night at his school.

At nightfall I had a talk with Sri Rajani Kanta Sanyal, cousin to Sri Jagat Kishore Acharya Choudhury of Muktagacha. He left with the knowledge that I would start for Berhampore towards day-break.

At daybreak I washed my hands and face and was about to start for Berhampore when suddenly a strange experience came upon me; words are inadequate for giving it expression. Just as I attempted to proceed I felt as if somebody whispered in my ears, 'Where are you going? You have much to do here. It is a holy place on the Ganga, a locality of Brahmans and a flourishing place. You must stay here.' Once, twice, thrice did I hear this voice. Again I made an attempt to stand up, I felt that somebody was pushing me down to sit, holding me by the waist. This was repeated three times.

The teacher sat by me. I did not express what was happening within me; only I told him of my resolve to stay in the locality for some time. At this the teacher said, 'All right. Come, please sit comfortably.' There were then at Bhabta only a few sweetmeat-stalls and grocers' shops. As I took my seat before them, the boys of the primary school, and some men, Hindus and Muslims stood round me.

Now came Rajani Sanyal and asked me, 'How, Sir, were you not to be on your way to Berhampore now?' 'No, Sir,' said I, 'I postpone going. I shall be in this locality for sometime.' At this he invited me to take prasadam of Mother Annapurna (giver of food to the world) at his uncle Sri Surya Sanyal's house at Mahula.

The news of the worship of Mother Annapurna gladdened me much. If this auspicious day had passed by while I was on the way there would have been no end to my sorrow. Did Mother Annapurna detain me here that I might alleviate the distress of the miserable people in that famine? I felt so in the inmost part of my heart and inwardly said to the Mother, 'Now it is you that I shall have accounts to square up with.'

Mahula

I tarried not a bit at Bhabta, but after a dip in the Ganga hastened to Surya Sanyal's chandimandap (hall in front of the chapel). There I found Sanyal and his priest getting ready for the worship. On hearing that Rajani Sanyal had sent me, he offered a Kusasana (a mat of Kusa grass) to sit on.

On enquiry I was told that they had not the custom of chanting the *Chandi* on the occasion of the worship. But he had a volume of *Chandi* brought for me. I began to chant it. Many a Mahula Brahman and others, came and heard my chanting.

In the afternoon, after they had got the Prasadam, some Brahmans, men and boys. came to me. The absence of Sikhā (tuft of hair) on the heads of many Brahmans, young and old, of such a village surprised me. At nightfall I took them to the Ganga beach and taught them how to invoke Gayatri and how to chant it with proper intonation. I also gave the broad meaning of Gayatri. An Arya is known by his Sikha and Sutra (sacred thread). So I advised all, Brahmans, Vaisyas and Sudras, to have the Sikha.

After nightfall I came back to Sanyal's chapel and remained seated before the Mother.

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At about 4 a.m. some peasants wearing *bainjore* (a gingling circular ornament worn at the ankles) came dancing and twirling their limbs as they sang, '*Tārē nāre nāre gō ēso gō Mā Sarasvati* (come mother Sarasvati)'. Thus they invoked the goddess and began their Bolan (folk song). This was the first time that I was present at the Bolan and dance of cultivators. There was reference to drought and want of food in their song, for example :—

We die of want of food,
We die of want of water etc.

I at ance got the whole Bolan song written. Then I wrote to the Math an account of the famine and put the song in it. When the peasants were leaving, Sanyal gave each of them a bundle of Mudki (a kind of sweetened fried rice) and said that this was the custom there. That very night a Brahman invited me to have my Bhiksha at his house the next day.

About Mahula

It would not be out of place here to give some particulars about the village of Mahula. Formerly Mahula was a large populous village. People of many castes such as the Brahmans and others lived here. The swift-flowing Ganga washed away its bank and destroyed the beauty and prosperity of Mahula. The real name of the village is 'Anantapur Mahula'. For fear of erosion the people of Mahula began to settle in the neighbouring villages like Chandipur, Mahisatali, Baninathpur, Binkar.

Together with the Brahman I have mentioned I came from Chaker-Māth-Mahulā to Kedār-Māti-Mahulā. After I had my *bhiksha* I was lodged in a brick-built house of a Brahman gentleman. The owner of the house lived at Berhampore for the sake of his job. The house was vacant and was rather cool on account of the shady trees in the west.

I had heard, before my arrival here that there lived in this village a Tantrik Sanyasi, versed in the scriptures. He had come from western India. I have seen the small 'Atchala' (a hut with eight thatched slanting roofs) wherein he lived. The men of Mahula called him Dandi Thākur. Probably a year or two before I came he had breathed his last. The men of the village took me for one such Sanyasi and gave me the appellation of Dandi Thakur. Since then the people of the locality, Hindus and Moslems, have known me by the name of Dandi.

From 'Chaker-Math-Mahula' I came to 'Kedar-Mati-Mahula' on the last day of the Bengali month of Chaitra in the year 1303 B.S. In this locality men call this day as *dhuper din,* day of incense burning. For on this day in the evening the peasants who take the vow of Nila, tie on their waist a ladle-like vessel with burning fire. They burn incense therein and dance keeping time with a drum. They also pierce an arrow into their body.

Here there was a copy of *Yogavasishtha Ramayana* and I could have it for reading — this information cheered me up. But the owner of it was at the town of Berhampore.

From the first day of the Bengali month of Baisakh in 1304 B.S. every afternoon I explained the Gita to a small assembly. The impulse for work was so great in me that I found it impossible to sit idle. In two or three days the book *Yogavasishtha* reached my hands.

(*To be continued*)

The duties ordained with regard to every mode of life are capable, if well performed, of leading to heaven and the high fruit of Truth. Duties have many doors, and none of the practices enjoined by them fails to produce the desired effect.

—*Mahabharata,* Shanti Parva, 353—2.

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ASPERSIONS ON INDIAN CHRISTIANS

O. M. THOMAS

An article titled 'The Indian Christian in a Moral Conflict' by Swami Shraddhananda in the issue of this Magazine for July 1961, calls for a factual reply. The Swami begins his indictment as follows :

> 'The Indian Christian is bound to face a moral conflict in the issue between his religion and his nationalism if he wants to take both of them seriously. In the days of the British Raj there was no occasion for this conflict because most of the Indian Christians, though born and brought up in India, somehow identified themselves with the ruling class and delighted — subconsciously at least — to consider themselves separate from and of course superior to the "natives". They rarely co-operated with the national aspirations of the vast mass of the Indian people. This was in a way consistent with their basic concept of nationalism, for India was not their real "home." Their real home was in some corner of a distant land, where the white rulers came from.'

The fact is that Indian Christians were known in the early days of British rule in India as 'native Christians'. Far from considering themselves superior to the 'natives', they suffered under the common stigma of being called 'natives' along with other people of India, by the Whites. Indeed, Christians racy of the soil of India were doubly dubbed 'natives', that is, as 'native Christians' and as 'natives' of India. So they could not have regarded themselves as superior to 'natives'.

It is a slander on Indian Christians to say that 'their real home was in some corner of a distant land . . .' In view of the deep racial difference between the white and coloured peoples Indian Christians were not such morons as to think that they were at one with their white rulers. Nor did they believe that the salvation of their dead required their ashes to be immersed in any river in Europe, or that any snow-clad mountain in the West was the mythical abode of their God. Shri M. Ruthnaswamy, a former Vice-Chancellor of Annamalai University, observes : 'India is their (Indian Christians') one and only country to love and cherish. For while a Hindu for his good deeds on earth may be born again in the White House at Washington or in Buckingham Palace in London or, *summum bonum* of all, in the Kremlin in Moscow, the Christian has no other earthly existence to look to. He has this one life to live and this one country, India, to love and cherish, to love and die for' (*Voice of Truth*, p. 50 ; St. Paul's Press, Allahabad).

The Swami says that Indian Christians rarely co-operated with the national aspirations of the vast mass of the Indian people. Did that 'vast mass' have any national aspirations ? They lived in 'patient, placid, pathetic contentment' with their miserable lot. A small number of educated Indians, under the initiative of a Scot, who had retired from the Indian Civil Service, A. O. Hume, with the approval of the then Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, founded the Indian National Congress in December 1885, which became the spearhead of the Indian nationalist movement. The first President of the Congress, as admitted by Mahatma Gandhi at the Second Round Table Conference in London, was an Indian Christian. The Rev. Kalicharan Banerji, patriot and orator, was kept out of the Presidentship of the Congress because he was a Christian, though this will not be admitted by Hindu nationalists. The official historian of the Congress, the late Dr Pattabhi Sitaramayya, even throws the sop to the spirit of the Rev. Kalicharan by recording that had he lived he would have adorned the Presidential *gaddi* ! Joseph Baptista, trusted friend of and collaborator with Lokamanya Tilak, George Joseph, Chakkara Chetty, these were Indian Christians prominent in their day in the Congress.

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Now, cast a glance at the pre-Congress times. More than a hundred years before the Congress was founded a Syrian Catholic priest of Malabar, the late Rev. Father Thomas Paremakal, wrote in his book called *Varthamana Pusthakam*, regarded as the first prose work in Malayalam, his national testament, so to speak, boldly exposing the greed and craft of the Western powers then digging themselves in, in India, and strongly urging the need for unity and liberation of his country. It was a time when the help of rival Europeans in India was being sought in competition by Hindu and Muslim rulers in their fateful internecine wars, thus paving the way for the subjection of India to Britain.

It was an (East) Indian Christian, Henry Louis Vivian Derozio, a teacher of the Hindu College of Calcutta, founded in 1817, who, with his passionate patriotism, inspired the youth to the point of his being called the Father of Young Bengal. Long before 'Bande Mataram' and 'Jana, Gana, Mana' were composed, Derozio in his poem *To India — My Native Land* sang :

> 'My country ! in thy day of glory past
> A beauteous halo circled round thy brow,
> And worshipped as a deity thou wast.'

The great popularity of Derozio among his students alarmed orthodox Hindus, including Ram Kamal Sen, the famous Keshub Chunder Sen's grandfather. A vile whispering campaign was started against Derozio, who was later dismissed from the College staff on the groundless basis of scandal. Broken-hearted, Derozio, a precocious genius, died before he completed 23 years of age.

Among the brilliant band of Derozians was Krishna Mohan Banerji, who embraced Christianity, and who was one of the front-rank leaders of Bengal. He was the first President of the Indian Association, the precursor of the Indian National Congress.

A word about the national outlook of Indian Christians in recent years. When Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer, as the then Dewan of Travancore, announced on June 11, 1947, his decision to set up Travancore as an 'independent sovereign State', some Christian Bishops of Travancore courageously opposed the move, and their opposition strengthened the hands of Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel to defeat the Princely plot.

One-third of the total Christian population in India is in Kerala. When the Congress decided to pull out of Indian States in 1938 the Travancore State Congress was started to agitate for responsible government for the State. Christians joined this organisation in large numbers. Shri Mannath Padmanabhan later nicknamed the State Congress as 'Christian Congress', and several Hindus left the State Congress and founded another organisation called the Democratic Congress or some such name. It is not the Indian Christians who refuse to co-operate with Hindus ; it is Hindus who, as in the instances given above, non-co-operate with Indian Christians, and on the rare occasions on which the Hindus do co-operate, the role of Christians is not duly recognised.

The Swami makes much of the now obsolete word 'heathen'. In current Christian literature or speech this word is not used at all, as the word *mlechcha* has ceased to be employed by caste Hindus against non-Hindus. Deeds count for more than words. Indian Christians are treated by castemen as impure people whose touch will pollute. Even in cities like Bombay and Calcutta, with their urbanity, there are Hindu house-owners who will not have Christians or Muslims as tenants. After the so-called abolition of Untouchability there has been a steep fall in the offerings in renowned Hindu temples. There is a notice board today, I learn, in a South Indian temple with the legend : 'Christians, Muslims, and dogs are not admitted'. In Christian churches the presence of non-Christians during divine service is not prohibited at all.

Christians started the humanitarian work of uplifting the Untouchables long before Gandhi was born. But their benevolent institutions are viewed with suspicion as baits for conversion. Swami Shraddhananda says : '*Christian*

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love as it stands now is exclusively directed to the Christian or to the prospective Christian.' This is a libel on the devoted and disinterested service of Christians in many spheres of life. In his Convocation address at Annamalai University in 1943, Sir Shanmukham Chetty said: 'In my own experience I have come across the silent and unostentatious work done by Christian missionaries and nuns in remote and unheard of villages and hamlets; and I have often asked myself the question, "Why is it that in spite of all its great philosophy the Hindu religion has not kindled this spirit in the hearts of its votaries?"' The answer is Christ's command: 'Love thy God, and love thy neighbour as thyself.' And the whole world is the Christian's neighbour. The Christian may, and often does, fall short of this sublime precept. But that will be the fault of the Christian, not of the precept.

The Swami says that 'religion has played a very important part in all walks of life from ancient times' in India. It has, even where it should not have, so much so that Marx remarked that it 'rendered murder itself a religious rite in Hindustan', as for instance the propitiation of Bhavani by the notorious Thuggs. Sex has even invaded Hindu temple architecture, which now provokes the pudor of many a Hindu, and the photographing of the carvings at Konarak and Khujruhao by Westerners is prohibited by Government.

All Indian culture is not and need not be Hindu culture. The Buddhist glories of Ajanta and Ellora, Moghul architecture with its consummation in the Taj Mahal, the poetry of Christians like Michael Madhusudan Dutt and Narayan Waman Tilak and of Muslims like Ghalib and Iqbal, are not part of Hindu culture, but are the pride of Indian culture. St. Paul exhorts Christians: 'Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.' It is a gospel of true culture. The Swami is entirely wrong when he says that 'many of the cultural traditions and behaviour patterns of the majority of Indians do not mean anything to him' (Indian Christian).

The Swami observes: 'Here comes his (Indian Christian's) moral conflict. A true spirit of nationalism demands that an Indian should feel one with all Indians, irrespective of their religious faith.' Hindus have not shown such nationalism in the past or the present. Says Dr Radhakumud Mookerji:

> 'The fact is that India presents the rare and remarkable phenomenon of the state and the society co-existing apart from, and in some degree of independence of, each other as distinct and separate units, or entities, as independent centres of national, political and collective life and activity.
>
> 'Hindu India was able to live her usual life, to continue the course of her normal intellectual and spiritual progress, in her own socio-economic system in which the Muhammadan had no place.' (*Local Government in Ancient India*)

Hindu society has existed in isolation, not only from the Muslims, but from all non-Hindus.

Dr Narendranath Law says that 'the multiplication of castes and sub-castes . . . proved, as it does at present, a source of weakness to the body politic . . .' An astute English writer observes: 'The fundamental laws which governed Hindu society as a whole were personal laws bound up with caste, which took no account of the territorial limits of the many States into which India was from time to time split up. The allegiance rendered to the rulers of those States by their Hindu subjects was secondary to the loyalty each owed to his caste, since his caste was his karma, determining much more than his present life, namely, all his lives to come' (Sir Valentine Chirol, *India*, pp. 33-34).

Today Prime Minister Nehru and other leaders of the Congress are pleading against casteism, groupism, communalism, linguism, and other such forces threatening the unity of India, and are urging the need for the emotional integration of the people of this country.

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Indian Christians have not shown any disruptive tendency. In the Constituent Assembly they voluntarily agreed to give up separate representation which was offered to them. They did so in the larger interests of the nation. They have not asked for linguistic States which have proved a bane. They have not claimed any special privileges. Theirs is the only community which has adopted the word 'Indian' as the primary part of its name 'Indian Christian'. The lack of emotional integrity among the people of India is due to the conflict between what a social scientist, Karl R. Popper, calls 'the open society and its enemies'. Hindu society is a closed society. Membership of that society is determined by membership of a caste; membership of a caste is determined by birth, not by choice. On this closed society is super-imposed a democratic system of government which presupposes the existence of an open society as its base. Inevitably, the Hindu faces an acute conflict. The Indian Christian is in no dilemma, for his is an open society, with no regimentation or graded privileges conditioned by birth pre-ordained by karma. Christ taught: 'Give unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and unto God that which is God's.' It is a golden rule which saves Christians anywhere and everywhere from the sort of conflict that Swami Shraddhananda ineptly envisages in his article under reply.

IS THE INDIAN CHRISTIAN IN A MORAL CONFLICT?

CHANDRASHEKHAR KIRBY

Swami Shraddhanandji of Ramakrishna Mission has written an article entitled 'The Indian Christian in a Moral Conflict' in the July issue of the *Vedanta Kesari* published in Madras.

Swamiji's presumptions

In his article, the Swamiji has tried to suggest that the Indian Christian is bound to face a conflict between his *Christian Religion* on the one hand, and his *Indian Nationality* on the other, if he takes both of them seriously. By this statement, the Swamiji seems to imply and insinuate that a good Indian Christian cannot be a good Nationalist and a good Indian Nationalist cannot be a good Christian!

One fails to see the logic behind this argument, since the very basis of the argument is wrong, untenable and presumptuous! He argues as though Religion and Patriotism are contradictory and opposed to each other. Christianity does not teach its followers to dislike or hate their Motherland. An Indian can be a good Christian as well as a good Nationalist.

But if the Swamiji's inference is to be taken as correct and authoritative, then he would want us to conclude that an Indian cannot — and must not(?) — be a good Christian; and that a good Christian cannot — and must not(?) — be an Indian! On the same lines, he would also expect us to conclude that an Englishman or an American cannot be Buddhist and a patriotic Nationalist at the same time!

Christianity, — a universal religion

The Swamiji's surmises and inferences may be correct and applicable in the case of religions which are confined and restricted to the land of their birth; but they do not apply to Christianity, which is a *Universal Religion,* based upon the *Fatherhood of God* and the *Brotherhood of all Mankind* and therefore teaches its followers to become '*Vishwa-Kutumbis*' or World-Citizens! It is this constraining force of the Christian principle of Brotherhood, that has impelled hundreds of Missionaries and Doctors from Western countries, to go out of their native-land to distant

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and inconvenient corners of the globe, to spend their time, energy and their talents — transcending the narrow boundaries of their own Motherland — in order to bring comfort and relief to the last and the least and to the sick and suffering fellowmen.

Are only the Hindus patriotic Indians?

If only Hinduism makes the Indian a good patriot and a Nationalist, then how does the Swamiji explain or account for the betrayal of national interests, by the staunch and orthodox Hindus during the Moghul and British period of Indian history? And can the Swamiji point out cases of Indian Christians who have betrayed the interests of their Motherland? And if so, what is the proportion and enormity of such betrayal compared to those of the Hindu fold?

The very fact that there are hundreds of Christian Military and Naval Officers and thousands of Christian soldiers in the Indian Army and Navy, is a clear and convincing proof that the Government of India have full confidence in the loyalty and patriotism of Indian Christians. Furthermore, it must be admitted that that even the humble and honest Christian teachers and doctors are loyal and patriotic sons of India, in their respective spheres.

Implications of patriotism

Very often, the idea about Patriotism is very much muddled and confused. One is considered to be very patriotic and national-spirited — not only when one hides or ignores the blunders and evils of one's own country, but exaggerates the bad points of other nations and holds them up for ridicule and condemnation! But true patriotism should not be, 'My Country — right or wrong!' but 'My Country — to be set right, whenever and wherever it is wrong!', but should make the true patriot spend his energy and talents in loving service for the progress of his Motherland!

National and religious cultures

Now-a-days, there has been much confusion in the minds of many of our country-men regarding *National* and *Religious* cultures; and it is a pity that even educated and progressive thinkers like Swami Shraddhanandji, are falling a prey to such a tendency to mix up *Indian culture* with *Hindu culture*. It would help them to think and speak clearly and correctly if they recognised the fact that while all Hindu culture is Indian culture, all Indian culture is not necessarily Hindu culture, because so many religious cultures make up the Indian culture.

Out-dated Terminology

Furthermore, the Swamiji has put into the mouth of the Indian Christian, some out-dated terminology and says, in effect, that the Indian Christian looks upon his fellow-countrymen "with contempt and hatred as '*heathens*'"! I wonder where the Swamiji met such Indian Christians, and if at all he did meet such rare instances amongst the uneducated or bigoted Christians, how he was justified in drawing such a general and sweeping conclusion against the Christians as a whole! The word "Heathen" is out-dated, just like "Vernacular" for "Mother-tongue", and is no longer used by any educated Christian. The non-Christians are referred to as "our fellow-countrymen" or as "our non-Christian brothers".

It is indeed very sad to find that such statements and damaging generalisations are made against the Indian Christians, to create a prejudice against them, which might ultimately develop into a spirit of dislike and even hatred against the whole of the Christian Community — especially when such statements come from religious leaders. We are aware that some anti-Christian Communal organisations are carrying on their subtle and even open propaganda against the Indian Christians; but it is very sad as well as surprising that a disciple of Ramakrishna Mission should adopt or encourage such an attitude towards his own fellow-countrymen!

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Indian Christian Community

However, we shall not hesitate to admit, in all fairness, that the Indian Christian Community, which is so conglomorous — coming as it does, from different strata of the Indian Society — has not developed even its Community-Consciousness to any appreciable extent! Such being the case, it must be conceded that the National spirit has not developed sufficiently or satisfactorily. By this critical self-analysis or introspection, we do not mean to say or imply that we are unpatriotic or anti-national!

Those amongst us who are well-placed in life, live a selfish and self-centred life for and within their own family, adopting the easy and convenient principle of "Everybody for himself, and the Devil take the hindermost!" So, we find very few organisations, outside those started by Western Missionaries — which have been started and conducted for the welfare and benefit of the poor and backward members of their own community. And although the life and teachings of their Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, inculcate the principles of *Love* and *Sacrifice,* these are conspicuous only by their absence. Hence it is not strange or unusual, if they have not developed the National spirit to a high degree. This also accounts for the lack of even political consciousness and also for the lack of ambition to get into the Central or State Legislatures.

Nevertheless, our Community has thrown up a goodly band of nationalist leaders, Krishna Mohan Banerji, W. C. Bonnerji (— the first President of the Congress), Kali Charan Banerji, Joseph Baptista, George Joseph, Madhu Sudan Dutt, Chakkrai Chetty etc. Furthermore, it is a well-known fact that while all other minority communities were demanding communal representation, the Christians did not create such a hitch in the granting of Swaraj by the British, but were content to trust and depend upon their Hindu fellow-countrymen to deal with them fairly and sympathetically.

And it must be admitted that during the first few years the Indian Christians were shown much consideration in the appointment of Governors and Ministers; but this attitude has declined on the part of the political leaders and many members of the Christian community are dissatisfied and are beginning to ask for communal representation and reservation of seats.

What Christianity Teaches

It would be a great perversion of truth, to say or even suggest that the Christian religion teaches its followers, to look upon the followers of other faiths, with "derision", "contempt" or "hatred"! On the other hand, it teaches them to go out in sympathy, love and fellow-feeling, to rescue and help those in misery, sin and suffering. This is due to the constraining love of their Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, who sacrificed Himself to the uttermost — even to death on the Cross, — to save the last, least and the lost. It is this urge from within, that has impelled hundreds of Missionaries and Doctors to leave their kith and kin and go to darkest and most backward and inconvenient corners of the world, in order to bring sunshine and happiness amongst the unfortunate and downtrodden fellowmen in such countries.

The fact that more than 80% of the milk-powder, wheat, cheese etc., which comes from the United States of America, goes to feed the poor and starving non-Christian fellowmen in far-flung India without any evangelical strings, should be sufficient to refute the allegations and allay the fears of Swami Shraddhanandaji who says that "Christian love, as it stands now, is *exclusively* directed to the Christian, or to the prospective Christian; and the *heathen* can rarely claim a jot of it."!

I sincerely hope and appeal to all our educated and broad-minded fellow-countrymen — including Swami Shraddhanandji of Ramakrishna Mission — not to suspect the loyalty and bona-fides of the Indian Christians — or better still, Christian Indians, but to look

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upon them with trust and affection as their own kith and kin, which they really are! A change of religion, does not make an Indian a Foreigner!

The late Marathi poet, Narayan Waman Tilak, of revered memory, has fervently echoed the patriotic sentiments of Indian Christians more than half a century ago, in his famous poem "*Priyakara Hindisthan Amucha Priyakara Hindisthan!*".

REPLY

SWAMI SHRADDHANANDA

The editor of the *Vedanta Kesari* sent me last month the two rejoinders with the covering letters which he received from Mr. C. S. Kirby and Mr. O. M. Thomas regarding my article "The Indian Christian in a Moral Conflict", published in the July issue of the magazine.

Neither of these two gentlemen, I am pained to note, seems to have grasped the *spirit* of my article. Both have attributed to me some statements which can neither be found in, nor logically inferred from what I have written. My article was never meant to cast "Aspersions on Indian Christians" as Mr. Thomas has characterized it, or to raise suspicions about "the loyalty and bona-fides of Indian Christians", as Mr. Kirby apprehends. I, myself, consider the article as a friendly appeal to post-independence Christian Indians for an inner unity of heart with the majority of Indian people who are non-Christians.

Let me, first of all, make my position clear about certain points which the two reviewers have sought to refute.

(1) Nowhere in the article have I said that "A good Indian Christian cannot be a good nationalist and a good Indian Nationalist cannot be a good Christian."

(2) I have not said that "Hinduism alone makes the Indian a good patriot and a nationalist."

(3) Nowhere it has been indicated that all Indian Culture must be Hindu Culture.

(4) I have not said that Indian Christians have shown disruptive tendencies in the body-politic of Modern India.

The principal theme of my article may be summarized: (A) If an Indian Christian is very keen in following certain dogmas of his church in regard to the non-Christian, there is bound to grow within him a feeling of isolation from and derision towards the majority of his fellow countrymen. Consequently, it will be difficult for him to develop the highest form of National Consciousness, namely, the feeling of identity with the people—the living Nation. (B) On the other hand, 'If the Indian Christian learns to separate the kernel of Christ's teachings from the husk of dogmatic Church Theology, he may well be in a position to cultivate a complete Indian Nationalism * * * unity in variety has been always the search of the Indian mind. As an Indian National, the Indian Christian also, should place this great ideal before his mind. Let him develop a broad outlook towards his fellow citizens who do not belong to his own faith. * * * No, the Indian Christian need not have any moral conflict. He can well resolve it by rising to a truer perspective of religion and at the same time embracing the living nation as his own flesh and blood, with the requisite love, tolerance, patience and understanding.' (Quotes from the last two paragraphs of my article.)

Mr. Kirby writes: 'The very fact that there are hundreds of Christian military and naval officers and thousands of Christian soldiers in

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the Indian Army and Navy, is a clear and convincing proof that the Government of India have full confidence in the loyalty and patriotism of Indian Christians.' Very true. I, myself, have admitted that in the third paragraph of my article. But the point raised by me was not 'loyalty and patriotism', but 'National Consciousness.' I have explained the term clearly in my article. In short, it is a feeling of identity with the nation — the people. As Sri Jawaharlal Nehru mentions in his 'Discovery of India' (Chap. 1, section V), 'What counted ultimately were the people of India, people like them and me, who were spread out all over this vast land. Bharat Mata, Mother India, was essentially these millions of people.'

Now, for the average Indian Christian, his thoughts, emotions and activities are influenced a great deal by his church dogmas, many of which aim at asserting an exclusive superiority of the Christian religion and a concomitant vilification of non-Christian faiths. This is probably a necessary technique of all proselytizing religions. Swami Vivekananda remarks ('Bhakti Yoga', Chapter I) : 'That singleness of attachment (nishta) to a loved object, without which no genuine love can grow, is very often the cause of the denunciation of everything else. All the weak and undeveloped minds in every religion or country have only one way of loving their own ideal, and that is to hate every other ideal. Herein is the explanation of why the same man who is so lovingly attached to his own ideal of God, so devoted to his own ideal of religion, becomes a howling fanatic as soon as he sees or hears anything of any other religion.'

As recently as August 1960, Pope John XXIII had to soften Baptism ritual. Here is a true copy of the Associated Press news :

> Vatican City, August 1—(*AP*). Pope John XXIII has taken action to remove from Roman Catholic ritual, phrases that may be considered offensive to persons of other faiths. Authoritative Vatican sources disclosed today that on Pope John's order, the Congregation of Rites has eliminated certain phrases from the ritual of baptism for converts from paganism, Judaism, Mohammedanism and other faiths.
>
> The phrases eliminated were pronounced by the priest. If a person had been a pagan, the priest would tell him to 'hold in horror idols, reject images.' If a person had been Jewish, he would be told to 'hold in horror Hebrew perfidy' and to reject 'Hebrew superstition.'
>
> If a person had been a Moslem, the priest would exhort him to 'hold in horror Mohammedan perfidy,' and reject 'the wicked sect of infidelity'. If a person came from a Christian faith considered heretic, he would be told to 'hold in horror the heretic wickedness' and to reject his former faith as a 'sect of impious ones'.

Many sober Christian thinkers all over the world are increasingly feeling the need of a revaluation of many Church dogmas in the interest of international understanding and fellowship. To quote a passage from an article entitled 'The Coming Copernical Christology' by Professor W. O. Johnson of Park College, Missouri (*The Hibbert Journal*, October, 1960) :

> 'Jesus Christ is no longer the one and only Complete and final creating and Saving word of God. His Sovereignty is limited to this "wayside planet." He is but one among other instances of the eternal Logos becoming flesh in a divine Kenosis. He is not the only supernatural Saviour, but one of the plurality of Saviours sent forth to save a plurality of intelligent races of beings on a plurality of worlds throughout the flow of time.'

Mr. Thomas remarks, 'The Swami is entirely wrong when he says that "Many of the cultural traditions and behaviour patterns of the majority of Indians do not mean anything to him".' No, I am not wrong. Let me put a few straight questions to my critic.

(1) How many of the Indian Christians can identify themselves, partially at least, with the feeling of joy and festivity which is evoked in millions of Hindus when they observe the Dashera, Diwali, Shivaratri and so on? Prime Minister Nehru does not believe in orthodox Hinduism, yet he delights in sitting with thousands of his Hindu countrymen to witness the

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Ram Leela without any feeling of spite or superiority. This is what is called National Consciousness. If the Indian Christian cannot do that it is owing to his Church dogmas regarding the Non-Christian.

(2) How many of the Indian Christians share the attitude of reverence with millions of their Hindu Countrymen towards the Himalayas, the Ganga, the Narmada, the Yamuna, the Godavari? How many of them have cared to analyse the background of this age-old reverence?

(3) Millions of Hindus every year go on pilgrimage on special occasions to places far and near like Kailas, Kedarnath, Badrinarayan, Amarnath, Kanya Kumari, Puri and so on. How many of the Indian Christians try to bring a sympathetic understanding for this — a very prominent behaviour pattern of their Hindu countrymen?

(4) How many of the Indian Christians feel pride in the Sanskrit language and in the wisdom of the Vedas and the Upanishads?

(5) In Bengal and in some other parts of India, Hindu boys and girls observe every year in January the worship of Saraswati — the goddess of learning in almost every school. It is not so much a religious ceremony as an expression of reverence for learning through the medium of a concrete creative ideal. How many Christian educational institutions would permit this observance even though the majority of students are Hindus? I know one distinguished Christian girls' school in Calcutta where the students were mostly Hindus which did not allow the students to celebrate the birthday of the poet Rabindranath Tagore.

Examples could be multiplied. I do not mean by this, Hinduisation of our Christian Community. What I mean is mutual understanding, tolerance and good will. Dogmas should be separated from the essential truths of a religion. Then alone can there be unity of heart among peoples of different religions. I think, I made it abundantly clear what my attitude towards Christ's teachings are when I wrote in the fifth paragraph of my article:

'It is our conviction that in those teachings there is no room for contempt for any man. The essential message of Jesus is identical with the message of India's ancient spiritual teachers.'

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan rightly observes:

> 'The attitude of the ordinary Hindu to the Christian religion is one of sympathetic understanding and appreciation. Christianity has been with us from the second century A.D. It has not merely the rights of a guest but the rights of a native.'[1]

But the Indian Christians should also take note of his friendly warning:

> 'The history of Christianity shows how in its great days it was capable of giving as well as receiving. It has been perpetually changing its emphasis and even surrendering its dogmas. . . . We should not insist on an objective, universally valid doctrinal content. . . . Each religion contributes to the richness of the whole even as each note contributes to the complexity and harmony of the music of the symphony.'[2]

I am grateful to Mr. Thomas for pointing out the contributions of some eminent savants, foreign and Indian towards the development of political consciousness in India. Surely no patriotic Indian could afford to forget their names. Why, the names of a host of Western Orientalists could also be mentioned whose contributions to India's renaissance are well-known. What Hindu could forget the names of Max Muller and Deussen in the matter of their furtherance of Vedic and Vedantic knowledge? But should one insist that what these great personages did for India was the outcome of their Christian faith? Probably not.

Mr. Kirby tries to dig some examples of anti-national behaviour on the part of Hindus during the Moghul and British periods of Indian history. Mr. Thomas indicates several

[1] *East and West.* George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1956. p. 35.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 128-129.

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dark spots in the Hindu religious scene, namely, caste system, untouchability, sex in temple architecture etc. I do not want to say anything on these issues because they are irrelevant to the subject-matter of my article. Any impartial reader will realise that my article was not designed as an attack on Christianity. So a counter attack on Hinduism was uncalled for from my Christian friends. Hindu leaders right from Swami Vivekananda to Mahatma Gandhi have been painfully aware of several drawbacks of modern Hindu Society and have spent much of their time and energy for the eradication of those evils. The present writer too in his humble capacity has written dozens of articles to that effect. But what pains me very much is to find that even such an understanding and highly cultured gentleman like Mr. Thomas tends to equate Hinduism with casteism, murderous rites and sexy architecture. I wonder, why he omitted the sacred cow!

Evaluation of the cultural patterns of an ancient race requires tremendous patience and broadness of heart. It becomes extremely difficult when religious dogmas cloud one's judgment. Probably the principles behind the much condemned caste system were not so bad as its modern denouncers would want us to believe. Let a contemporary French historian speak: 'Caste, in fact, was born out of the profound spirit of tolerance that has always pervaded India. The problem of amalgamating an infinite variety of races and languages combined with widely different religious customs, cultural traditions and psychological tempers resulting from very different geographical settings and climates, without destroying their intrinsic freedom and self-identity, without infringing on their freedom of worship and thought, and without annihilating their distinctive social personalities, could be solved in no other way . . .

'Caste was the supreme expression of the genius of Indian Civilization: it was all at once labor union, enforcing a kind of rigid social security, and the extreme and final social expression of Civilization's *specialization*, every member of a given caste being trained for a particular function from the day of his birth. It enforced democratic equality within the group, provided a particular religious framework suited to the particular psychological disposition of the given caste members and yet dispensed with dogma by instilling respect in all Indians for multitudes of other forms of worship or thought suited to other castes; it made it possible for Hinduism to be both intensely catholic and yet devoted to religious freedom — freedom that could reach beyond the existing framework of the caste structure by allowing large enough groups to secede and form their own castes. Indians were taught at all times to respect, even encourage *differences* between human beings rather than seek conformity and *uniformity*.'[3]

Mr. Thomas expresses his concern about the success of the democratic system of government in India since it cannot work efficiently on a 'closed society' such as that of the Hindus. Does he imply that the only solution under this circumstance is for Hindus to embrace Christianity *en masse*?

(Sd.) Swami Shraddhananda.

San Francisco,
Nov. 28, 1961.

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[3] *The Soul of India* by Amaury de Riencourt. 1960. Harper & Brothers, New York. p. 97.

(With this reply the controversy on the article ends as it will not be possible to publish any further article regarding the controversy.

—*Editor*)

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NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

Swami Suddhasatwananda is Manager, Sri Ramakrishna Math and *The Vedanta Kesari,* Mylapore, Madras-4.

India's contribution to Education is the second in the series of articles by Dr V. N. Sharma.

Gayatri is a great mantra praying for illumination of our inner being. Hindus regard it with great reverence but possibly many do not know either its source or its importance in our religious practices. So though we had occasion to publish a review article on it in our November issue we hope our readers will also like the present article Gayatri Worship by Sri M. V. Sridatta Sarma, from Mysore.

We are thankful to Miss Elizabeth Copeland of Sherborn, Massachusetts, U.S.A., for enabling us to present our readers Swami Vivekananda's autograph which appears on pages 396-397 with a short account as to how Swamiji came to visit the Young family. We are also thankful to the Ramakrishna Vivekananda Center of New York for having kindly passed on such rare material to us for publication.

Sri O. M. Thomas, M.A., LL.B., is an Advocate from Allahabad.

Sri C. S. Kirby, B.A., is the Founder and Life-President of the Centenary Christian Association, Hubli.

Swami Shraddhananda, formerly Editor, *Udbodhan,* is now at the San Francisco Vedanta Society.

NATIONAL INTEGRATION

With the dawn of independence India seems to be again slowly sinking into the doldrums of inertness and the consequent jealousies and differences, leading to internecine quarrels. A great many reasons and causes are attributed to this state of affairs and equally great number of remedial measures for the removal of the so-called causes are suggested. Probably the one thing that has met the most harsh treatment at the hands of the reformers, we should say undeservedly, is the caste system. The responsibility for all the ills of the country are laid at its door and there is a hue and cry against it from some sections of the people. Our purpose herein is not either to support nor condemn the system but to trace the cause of the fissiparous tendencies, but incidentally we cannot but show the incongruity of the argument that every ill of the country has resulted from the caste system. Similarly there are other views that religion, linguism, appeasement of the minority communities by the party in power etc. have been individually responsible for the fomentation of quarrels. While there may be some truth in all of these views, they do not bring out the true picture.

The disease lies deeper while the remedy seems to be only superficial. Interested parties are making caste as a stooge for the exploitation of the credulity of the masses and veiling their own selfish motives. The canker that has begun to eat into the vitals of our being is the demon of selfishness with its companions of greed for power and intolerance. We have not done anything to check these propensities but are trying to root out the ideal set before us. According to our scriptures a Brahmin is one who possesses an ideal character. His life was to be a selfless sacrifice by the cultivation of the highest virtues such as control of the mind and the body, purity of heart, austerity, forbearance, uprightness, knowledge, faith and realisation. He is the ideal man and there are illustrations in our epics and puranas to show that men have gained recognition as Brahmins though they were not born in the family of a Brahmin. This shows that India laid more

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stress on the character of an individual than mere heredity.

Now as to the question of national integration it is not necessary that all should be of the grabbing attitude, rather this way lies suicide and destruction. No good work has ever been done by a selfish person, what then to speak of building up of a nation! Speaking about the regeneration of India Swami Vivekananda says :

> 'The basis of all systems, social or political, rests upon the goodness of men. No nation is great or good because Parliament enacts this or that, but because its men are great and good. Men are more valuable than all the wealth of the world. . . . When you have men who are ready to sacrifice their everything for their country, sincere to the backbone, India will become great in every respect. Then only will India awake, when hundreds of large-hearted men and women giving up all desires of enjoying the luxuries of life, will long and exert themselves to their utmost for the well-being of the millions of their countrymen.'

So we see that it is the men that make the nation great and not the number of laws however well-meaning enacted by the Parliament. Linguism can function without detriment to national unity when this principle of integrity of man is secured. Socialism can work when men have truly grasped the idea of selflessness and not otherwise. Differences in religious faiths cannot become barriers to living in amity when men have understood the oneness of Truth. It is not, therefore, any one system that is at fault but men who stick to the letter and ignore the spirit behind it. It is selfishness that makes them blind to others' feelings and sufferings.

Casteism as existing today may be bad but it cannot be denied that the ideal man as conceived by that system, viz. the Brahmin, is the highest that can ever be envisaged. Swami Vivekananda's exhortation delivered more than sixty years ago on this subject can be read with profit in the present situation. The views expressed therein still hold good. He says :

> 'The difficult and the vexed question of caste and of social reformation has been uppermost in the minds of our people. I must frankly tell you that I am neither a caste-breaker nor a mere social reformer. I have nothing to do directly with your castes or with your social reformation. Live in any caste you like, but that is no reason why you should hate another man or another caste. It is love and love alone that I preach, and I base my teaching on the great Vedantic truth of the sameness and omnipresence of the Soul of the Universe. . . . Platform speeches have been made by the thousand, denunciation in volumes after volumes have been hurled upon the devoted head of the Hindu race and its civilization and yet no good practical result has been achieved; and where is the reason for that? It is in the denunciation itself. Denunciation is not at all the way to do good. . . . The ideal man of our ancestors was the Brahmin. In all our books stands out prominently this ideal of the Brahmin. Our ideal is the Brahmin of spiritual culture and renunciation. . . . Brahmin-ness in which the worldliness is altogether absent and true wisdom is abundantly present. That is the ideal of the Hindu race. . . . There is a law laid on each one of you in this land by your ancestors, . . . that you must make progress without stopping and that from the highest man to the lowest Pariah, everyone in this country has to try and become the ideal Brahmin. . . . Such is our ideal of caste, as meant for raising all humanity slowly and gently towards the realisation of that great ideal of the spiritual man.'

Let us ruminate over these words of Swami Vivekananda whose love for the country is without a parallel and who even in the highest hour of triumph had but one thought, that of the well-being of the millions of our country, whose one aim in life was to rejuvenate the people of India and through them spread the universal message of brotherhood of man as taught by Sri Ramakrishna. There can be no clearer directive as to what is our duty in helping the country to achieve a welfare State. All evils and problems can be efficiently solved if we but follow these directions and try to cultivate the virtues already enumerated. It is selflessness alone that will pay in the long run both for the individual and the community. Let us be honest and try sincerely to reach the ideal.

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REVIEWS AND NOTICES

PRECEPTS FOR PERFECTION: Compiled by Sabina Thorne. Pub. Ganesh & Co., (Madras) Private Ltd., Madras-17. Pp. 235, Price Rs. 10/-.

Sri Ramakrishna was fortunate in his disciples. Around him rose a galaxy of remarkable spiritual personalities who lived the truth of their Master's Teaching and became powers for the dynamic transmission of the Message all round the world. It was a happy idea of the present compiler, Sabina Thorne, to collect significant sayings of as many as eighteen such Disciples on spiritual life and the preparatory discipline that is essential for it.

Arranged under successive heads e.g. Fundamental tenets, External behaviour, Moral principles, Mental attitudes, Spiritual practices, and finally Realisation, these utterances are not moral maxims to be gone through with approval but condensed messages from spiritual depths which are meant to be singly taken, meditated upon and put into practice. We would quote a few typical sayings, each on a different subject:

'There is mercy in what He gives, and there is mercy in what He denies.

We create our own destiny by our thoughts and desires.

Heredity (is) the channel of manifestation (of Karma).

To understand a great man we must ourselves be great.

No work is good or bad in itself; but the motive with which we proceed to do it makes it so.

There are as many ways to Truth as there are individuals who seek it.

By observing the faults of others we are gradually infected by them.

Unless the grace of God descends upon man he cannot know Him.'

Then in the profound section on Meditation:

'Meditation can be practised in both centres (brain and heart). I would advise you at first, however, to meditate in the heart ... After meditation sit quietly for at least half an hour; for during meditation itself the desired effect may not be produced. It may come later. The mind often grows calm while you are relaxing after meditation and spiritual experiences come.'

How true and how helpful these words of guidance are, only those who meditate would gratefully testify.

There are in all seven hundred of these precepts in this beautifully produced volume. Seven hundred is a sacred number in our scriptures: the Gita has 700 verses and seven hundred also are the inspiring verses of Chandi.

M. P. PANDIT

SAIVA SIDDHANTA (as expounded in the Sivajnana-Siddhiyar and its Six Commentaries): By Dr V. A. Devasenapathi, Reader in Philosophy, University of Madras. Published by the University of Madras. Pp. 322. Price Rs. 15/-.

This book under review is a weighty and authoritative exposition of the Saiva Siddhanta as expounded and interpreted by Sivacarya and the six commentaries on Sivajnana Siddhiyar. We have a few other books on this subject, both Indian and foreign, but the outstanding merit of the book under review is that it never deviates from the original Tamil Texts and also does not aim at any comparative estimate of allied Western systems. The book is divided in the way of the main concepts of the Siddhanta — theory of knowledge, Pati, (the Lord), Pasu (Soul), Pasa (bonds) and finally Mukti or release.

True to tradition, the author first takes up the problem of the theory of knowledge (alavai) and discusses its various aspects. Only three pramanas viz., perception, inference and sabda, are recognised and all the others are capable of being subsumed under these three and even these three in the last analysis serve only the fundamental one-cit sakti. It is interesting that the treatment of these pramanas in the Tamil Texts is surprisingly of the same pattern as of the other Samskrit *Darsanas*.

In the second section the author brings together all the arguments for and against God's existence. Though these arguments are given in the agamas, they are not accepted by all and hence the special attempt on the part of the commentators in this respect. The various arguments given in the several systems regarding God are discussed and criticised in this connection. The Mimamsaka argument that there is no necessity for God to supervise human destiny is discussed and answered but many of the replies are more or less analogical and merely illustrative. The difference between the Advaita and the Saiva Siddhanta is ably discussed by the author. Incidentally we may note that the commentators differ among themselves regarding the various aspects of this as well as of other questions, but this is only to be expected in a growing philosophical literature.

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Pasa is treated in the next section. Pasa implies maya, karma and anava and in this connection the author makes clear what Pasa is and its evolutes are. The position of all the other schools is discussed and criticised. Virtues and vices are next taken up and the author emphasizes that the Siddhantin's ethics is God-centered and not man-centered. The question which incidentally is asked of all the Indian systems of thought, whether there is any true morality in Saiva Siddhanta is answered clearly. The Soul with its real characteristics, is the next topic. It is neither the physical body nor the five senses, nor manas nor prana nor citta. But at the same time the Siddhantin denies the Advaitic view of the ultimate unreality of the soul, presumably the jiva. What the soul in bondage is, is next taken up. Regarding the means of Release, the four-fold dasa marga, satputra marga, saha marga and san marga are discussed. Corresponding to these we have different types of release — saloka, samipya, sarupya and sayujya. Along with this is given an account of the five types of yagas—ways of worshipping Siva.

Dr Devasenapathi finally discusses some general characteristics of Saiva Siddhanta. In one place evidently in reference to Advaita Vedanta, he argues that a pluralism which is God-united is preferable to a Monism that denies God and souls alike. He also points out that a relative reality of the soul is to deny bondage and release. The doctrine of the levels of reality evidently does not appeal to the author who as a theist emphasises worship and veneration of God as the ultimate goal.

The author has exhaustively brought out the points made by each of the commentators and thus we have a wealth of details regarding the Siddhanta. The book is a substantial and learned contribution to the system of Saiva Siddhanta and the author has spared no pains to make it as comprehensive and lucid as possible.

S. RAJAGOPALA SASTRI

LETTERS TO RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR: By M. K. Gandhi: Pp. 248. Price Rs. 2.50. Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad-14.

One cannot too highly evaluate the efforts of the Navajivan Publishers, to preserve for posterity what all Gandhiji had done, said and written: His letters to his closest associates, form no insignificant part of his writings, and one is enabled to note with what keen interest he had been watching the daily life and routine and even petty domestic problems and physical ills of his innumerable followers. As letters they are mostly informal and chatty, but behind them all lie his overmastering faith in God and love of his fellow beings. 'God', he says, 'is the greatest physician'. (131). 'If you have a hail-storm, why can't you say, 'God knows best. If He does not, Who does?' (P. 112). His limitless trust in the Gita gospel, enabled him to prescribe reading chapter 6 to 'overcome depression' (119). Of Jawaharlal, he confesses, 'The more I see him, the more I love him' (129). 'He is at heart religious, though he denounces religion. He reads the Gita' (154).

A Vedantin amongst politicians, only he could express himself thus on the death of Dr Ansari: (P. 74). 'There need be no sorrow over his death, because it is the only perishable body that has perished, not the indestructible soul within. Having put off the old garment, it will put on a new and better one. Being used only to rely upon the feeble evidence of our senses, we refuse to believe that things go on, which transcend our senses'.

A puritan to his finger tips, he would never impose his discipline on others: he would advise them not to tie themselves 'to the desk' 'but play tennis daily' (142).

S. RAJAGOPALAN

INDIAN IDEALISM AND MODERN CHALLENGES: By Dr P. T. Raju. Pub. Punjab University, Chandigarh. Pp. 208. Price Rs. 10.

Based upon three Extension Lectures delivered at the University of Punjab by Dr Raju, well-known for his philosophical expositions of Indian Thought this work traces the development of Idealism in Indian Philosophy from the times of the Upanishad through the determinative reigns of Shankara and Ramanuja down to the present. Comparison is made with the thought-currents in the same field in Western Philosophy and it is pointed out how the Indian Idealism embraces the problem of man, world and God in an integral manner in contradistinction to the Western approach which is compartmental and in effect artificial.

Dr Raju subjects the contribution of this Idealism to a thorough analysis and examines its conclusions in the light of the developments of modern scientific and technological progress. Due to its inherent relation with deep spiritual experience Indian philosophy can stand challenge from any kind of enquiry. Yet, says the author, its formulations as systematised in the *vadas* of the Acharyas, and developed by their disciples, need to be modified, extended in their connotation and sometimes revised in the context of the more ancient perceptions of the sages, if the

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problems of the modern age are to be squarely met and solved. Several interesting issues are raised and whether we agree with all the conclusions of the author or not, the book certainly makes stimulating reading.

M. P. PANDIT

EVEN BEHIND THE BARS: By Kaka Saheb Kalelkar. Translated by Sarojini Nanavati. (Pp. 98. Price 1.25. Navajivan Publishing House Ahmedabad 14).

This is a book of "Jail experiences", but unlike others of the same species, it provides a diverting account of how the inmate, Kaka Saheb Kalelkar, found peace and joy in the company of birds and beasts, plants and shrubs, flowers and trees. Indeed, he found so much to do, tending them and nurturing them that when at last the gaol gates opened, he could not leave his scene of activities without a depressing thought that he had "to return from heaven to the world of mortal men".

The Gita speaks of a recluse who is a "Sarva bhuta hite ratah". This publication shows that this ideal could be realised.

S. RAJAGOPALAN

MALAYALAM

BRAHMANANDIYAM: Edited by Swami Agamananda. Sri Ramakrishna Advaitashramam, P.O. Kaladi. Pages 351. Price Rs. 4.

This is the revised and enlarged third edition of the Malayalam work originally published in 1931, and gives a detailed account of the life and teachings of Swami Brahmananda, the 'Spiritual son' of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. Various articles in Bengali and English about Swami Brahmananda translated into Malayalam by Sri P. Seshadri and Swami Agamananda are collected in this handy volume.

Rakhal Chandra Ghosh, who later came to be known as Swami Brahmananda, was born in 1863 at Shikra Kulingram, Mahakuma Basirhat, District Twentyfour Parganas in West Bengal, as the son of a Zamindar, Ananda Mohan Ghosh, and his pious wife Kailas Kamini. He was of a religious temperament even in his childhood. At the age of five he lost his mother. After his early education he was taken to the Training Academy in Calcutta for higher studies. At the age of 19, he married a sister of Manomohan Mitra through whom he came into contact with Sri Ramakrishna. Rakhal regarded Paramahamsa as a parent and was like a child of three or four with him. For five years he was very closely and intimately associated with Sri Ramakrisha. When the master entered into Mahasamadhi in 1886, Rakhal completely gave up his worldly life and took to Sannyasa assuming the new name Brahmananda. When in 1897 Swami Vivekananda started the Ramakrishna Mission, Brahmananda was made its President. And when in 1902 Swami Vivekananda entered Mahasamadhi, Swami Brahmananda had to shoulder the entire responsibility of leading the Mission to great spiritual heights. He entered into Mahasamadhi in 1922.

Swami Brahmananda was a man of great spiritual wisdom. His very presence was ennobling and elevating. Personal reminiscences about him are narrated by Swami Nirvanananda, Swami Siddhesvarananda, Swami Aparnananda, Sister Devamata, Smt. Tara Sundaridasi and others including P. Seshadri. What we find in his teachings is not merely the sayings of a learned scholar, but really the revelation of his own deep religious experiences, which is of special significance in this age of scepticism.

Swami Agamananda, the editor of the work, was an indefatigable and enthusiastic fighter for the cause of spiritual uplift of the country; his sad demise soon after the publication of this edition has created a void which it is not easy to fill.

DR K. KUNJUNNI RAJA

SANSKRIT-MALAYALAM

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHTOTTARANAMA-STOTTRAM: By Swami Vimalananda. Published by Swami Amalananda, Ramakrishna Ashrama, P.O. Pudukkad. 1961 Pages 48. Price 75 nP.

In this Sanskrit Stotra containing 30 Anustup verses are given, 108 different epithets of Sri Ramakrishna, referring to the various incidents in his life and suggesting the manifold aspects of the spiritual greatness of his great personality. The general introduction and the detailed commentary in Malayalam given by the author himself will be of great help to the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna in understanding the significance of the Stotra.

DR K. KUNJUNNI RAJA

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NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA, KALLAI, CALICUT-3.

Report for Jan. 1959 to March 1961

The main activities of the Ashrama are the maintenance of a Secondary School, a Primary School, a Students' Home for Boys, a Charitable Dispensary. Its religious and cultural activities consist of daily worship and bhajana; celebration of festivals such as Navaratri etc., the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda. The Secondary school had 855 students (526 boys and 329 girls) on Jan. 1961. The number of boys in the Students' Home was 68 in 1958 and 72 in 1960. The total number of patients treated by the Dispensary in 1959 and 1960-61 was 29,810 and 48,073 respectively. Milk was distributed to 350 children and patients daily. The Community Hall is utilised for cultural and educative film shows to the school children. The management thanks friends, donors and well-wishers and appeals for funds for a good building for the Students' Home to accommodate 100 students and more land for the play-grounds.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION NIVEDITA GIRLS' SCHOOL & SARADA MANDIR

Report for 1959, 1960-61

The Nivedita School was opened by the Holy Mother in 1898 and was tentatively started then but turned into a regular school only in 1902. It has now a Primary, a Higher Secondary (Multipurpose) and an Industrial Section. It has a library with 6443 books and a reading room with 16 periodicals.

It had on its rolls in the Primary and Secondary sections 731 and 730 students in the years 1959 and 1960-61 respectively. In the Industrial section the number of students in the two years was 74 and 78 and those that appeared in L.B.N. examination were 38 and 32 respectively.

Both in 1959 and 1960-61 more than fifteen per cent students enjoyed free studentship and concessions besides stipends from the Poor Fund. Books worth about Rs. 500/- were distributed to the deserving students of the Primary and the Secondary sections.

In the School Final there were 100% passes in 1959. The passes in 1960 were 28 out of 40.

Sarada Mandir which has nineteen monastic members of the Sri Sarada Math is also running a boarding home for students. There were 38 boarders in 1959 as well as in 1960-61. Though the students are admitted on payment, concession or free boarding is allowed in the case of deserving.

The Primary School caters free tiffin to the children who are usually poor and are from the locality, the average monthly expense on this account alone being Rs. 200/-. The management appeals for donations to meet this as well as the other needs of the School.

The management also thanks the donors and well wishers for their generous help.

VIVEKANANDA BIRTH CENTENARY ARRANGEMENTS FOR CELEBRATION

January 1963 to January 1964

Swami Vivekananda's utterances on rural development and character-building education will be printed by the Union Ministry of Community Development for free distribution among five and a half lakhs of villagers in India on the occasion of the Swamiji's centenary celebrations which will be inaugurated at Belur Math in January, 1963.

A documentary film on Swamiji will be produced by the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

Mr. P. N. Kripal, Secretary, Education Ministry, has agreed to print Swami Vivekananda on Education in different languages for free circulation over the whole of Indian Union, while Mrs. Durgabai Deshmukh, Chairman, Central Social Welfare Board, has promised to reprint in 17 of the Indian languages the Swamiji's book on the Women of India.

With the help of the universities, associations and societies, arrangements will be made for special lectures and meetings in India and abroad to spread the teachings of the Swamiji.

A convention of the Sannyasins and Brahmacharins of the Ramakrishna Order will be held at Belur while others at Varanasi or Allahabad or Kankhal with a view to establishing harmony and mutual goodwill will also be convened.

The Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda falls on January 28, 1962.

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SRIMAT SWAMI SANKARANANDAJI MAHARAJ
President, Ramakrishna Math and Mission
who attained Mahasamadhi on Saturday, the 13th January, 1962

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.... Be bold and face
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease.
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XLVIII FEBRUARY 1962 No. 10

MAHASAMADHI

It is with deep sorrow that we announce the passing away of His Holiness Srimat Swami Sankaranandaji Maharaj, the seventh President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, on Saturday, January 13, at 3-10 a.m., at the Belur Math, the Headquarters of the Order.

Born on the Shivaratri day, March 9, 1880, he joined the Math at Belur in the year 1902. A nephew of Swami Sadananda, one of the first disciples of Swami Vivekananda, he was drawn to the life of renunciation early in life. A further fillip was received to this urge from hearing Swami Vivekananda's addresses in Calcutta, which finally culminated in his joining the Math. He was initiated into Sannyasa in 1906 by Swami Brahmananda.

He had the privilege to live with and serve Swami Ramakrishnananda at Madras in the year 1902-3. He visited Japan and China along with Swami Sadananda in 1903. He imbibed the spirit of Swami Vivekananda's message, of seeing the Divine in man and served the suffering humanity in various relief works at Bhagalpur, Chilka, Noakhali and other places.

He served Swami Brahmananda, his beloved Guru, occasionally at first, and then from 1909 onwards for about 11 years as the private secretary.

He was instrumental in the selection and purchase of land for and construction of the Bhubaneswar Math at the command of Swami Brahmananda. Under his supervision many other important buildings were constructed at various places, of which Holy Mother's and Swami Brahmananda's temples at Belur Math are but two instances.

Of a silent disposition and a Swami of few words, he looked outwardly grave and unapproachable. But those who came in close contact with him felt the touch of a loving heart and genial amiability. His was a life of austere practices silently lived. We owe not a little to him for the collection and preservation of the letters of the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, which today give succour to thousands of spiritually hungry souls.

He became the Vice-President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission in 1947 and its President in 1951. He had visited and stayed at the Madras Math for some time both in 1947 and 1952. Under his regime the Mission expanded its activities and also saw the fulfilment of Swami Vivekananda's two great wishes, viz. (1) the establishment of a separate Math for women, and (2) the opening of a Training Centre for training the young novices to flower into worthy monks of the Order.

He leaves behind him thousands of initiated disciples who owe all of their spiritual life to him. There are many others who undoubtedly will always draw spiritual inspiration from his exemplary life.

Om Shantih *Shantih* *Shantih*

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ARE BHAKTI AND JNANA CONTRADICTORY?

The notion that bhakti (devotion) and jnana (knowledge) are contradictory seems to have taken deep roots among the populace. People seem to presume that bhakti and jnana cannot be practised by one and the same person and that the goal of the two are quite different. For a long time the quarrel as to which is superior had gone on and even now there are people who would not be satisfied unless they establish one as superior to the other. But is this quarrel an essential one? Do the two paths differ entirely from each other or is there any similarity in their approach? Is the goal of each a different one? These are the questions that face us. However, before discussing these questions it is necessary to have an idea of what is meant by bhakti and what is meant by jnana. Probably this false notion of bhakti being contradictory to jnana and *vice versa* may then leave us by itself. It is the want of a proper understanding of these two terms that has created so much confusion.

What is generally considered as bhakti constitutes singing hymns and devotional songs, attending discourses on the doings of the Incarnations of God on Earth, visiting temples, worship and the like. But this is not all, it is only the preparatory stage, it is only the getting ready to enter into the portals of bhakti. First of all one does these things mechanically, but because mechanical performance of worship does not take us to the Ideal forthwith it is not to be discarded. On the other hand as it gradually leads us to the higher bhakti, it forms part of our sadhana. At the same time we should not stop or be satisfied with this mechanical worship. There should be love for God in singing His hymns and there should be the earnest longing in the prayer and worship for His vision and His presence. That alone is Bhakti. Let Sri Ramakrishna speak about it: 'It is a rare thing — this love of God. Bhakti can arise only when there is whole-hearted devotion to God such as that of a chaste wife to her husband. Pure Bhakti is very difficult to obtain. Through Bhakti the mind and soul must be absorbed in God. Then comes Bhava (the higher form of bhakti). In Bhava a man becomes speechless, his breath is stilled and the Kumbhaka (suspension of breath in Yoga practice) sets in of itself, just as, when one shoots at an aim, one becomes speechless and the breath is stopped.'

Ordinarily men worship God with different motives but that is not bhakti, that is not devotion in the true sense. Swami Vivekananda says: 'So long as you see a man love another only to get something from him, you know that that is not love; it is shop-keeping. Wherever there is any question of buying and selling, it is not love. So, when a man prays to God, "Give me this and give me that," it is not love. I offer you a prayer and you give me something in return; that is what it is, mere shopkeeping.'[1] This cannot help us reach the *summum bonum* of life, liberation, for which purpose alone bhakti is asked to be cultivated. Prayer to the Lord should be with all our heart and all our soul for a taste in repeating His name. Prayer should be not for any material prospects here nor for enjoyments in the heavens but for His love. Worship does not mean only chanting of some mantras and offering some flowers. It cannot be properly done by all. We must be equipped not so much with outer paraphernalia as inner purity. Sri Ramakrishna gives a beautiful parable illustrative of this point. It throws light on the necessity of purity of heart in a worshipper:

"There lived in a village a young man named Padmalochan. People used to call him 'Podo', for short. In this village there was a temple in a very dilapidated condition. It contained no image of God. Aswattha and other plants sprung up on the ruins of its walls. Bats lived inside and the floor was covered with dust and the dropping of the

[1] *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. II, 6th Edition, p. 47.

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bats. The people of the village had stopped visiting the temple. One day after dusk the villagers heard the sound of a conch-shell from the direction of the temple. They thought perhaps someone had installed an image in the shrine and was performing the evening worship. One of them softly opened the door and saw Padmalochan standing in a corner, blowing the conch. No image had been set up. The temple hadn't been swept or washed. And filth and dirt lay everywhere. Then he shouted to Podo :

> You have set up no image here,
> Within the shrine, O fool!
> Blowing the conch, you simply make
> Confusion worse confounded
> Day and night eleven bats
> Scream there incessantly. . . ." [2]

After stating the parable he himself expatiated on the subject. He said that the eleven bats were none other than the ten indriyas (sense organs) and the mind, which run after the evanescent pleasures and take in obnoxious ideas. These later develop as insurmountable impediments and hurdles in the path of the devotee in his struggle to set up the image of the Lord in his heart. A similar exhortation to purify our heart we come across in the bhakti scriptures : *devo bhutva devam yajet,* 'Worship God by becoming god-like.' That alone is true worship which is done by being pure inside and outside. He alone can truly worship who is free from impure thoughts. The rituals and other accessories are all ancillary to reach this stage of evolution, to get rid of the dross and encrustations that have gathered round the mind. For real worship love for God is the mainstay, the sheet-anchor, as is reflected in Sri Krishna's words : 'Whosoever offers Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit or a little water, I accept that devout offering of the pure-minded person.' [3] It is therefore not the outer manifestation of emotion but the inner purity of our being that God perceives. He looks into the heart of the devotees and not only on what they do in the outside world. Jesus Christ too stresses this when he says : 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.' [4]

The other bhakti, the para or the prema, or the supreme alone is the one which takes us to God, makes His presence felt incessantly, nay according to one of the Acharyas of Bhakti, viz., Yamunacharya, this supreme bhakti itself is God. Sage Narada speaks in a similar strain when he says 'The essential characteristics of Bhakti are consecration of all activities by complete surrender to Him and extreme anguish if He be forgotten.' [5] In that bhakti there is no give and take, it is all giving. Narada cites the love of the gopis of Vraja to Sri Krishna as an illustration of that bhakti. In that bhakti there is no I and mine, it is all He. Jayatirtha, another Acharya on bhakti in his *Nyayasudha* describes it as : 'an incessant flow of love, preceded by knowledge that God is possessed of unequalled, unexcelled, infinite auspicious qualities, which surpasses one's love to one's own body, relations and belongings and which is not shaken by a thousand troubles and difficulties.' [6] The Bhagavata describes : 'Bhakti is that which arouses in the devotee a continuous flow of thought toward Me seated in the hearts of all creatures, at the very mention of My glories, like the flow of waters of the Ganga towards the sea.' [7] Sri Ramakrishna speaking about the higher bhakti points out how difficult of

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[2] *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna,* IInd Edition, p. 53.

[3] पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति ।
तदहं भक्त्युपहृतमश्नामि प्रयतात्मनः ॥
Bhagavad Gita, IX. 26.

[4] St. Mathew, 7-21.

[5] तदर्पिताखिलाचारता तद्विस्मरणे परमव्याकुलता ।
N. B. Sutras. 19.

[6] तत्र भक्तिर्नाम निरवधिक अनन्त अनवद्य कल्याण-गुणत्वज्ञानपूर्वकः स्वस्वात्मात्मीयसमस्तवस्तुभ्योऽनेक-गुणाधिकोऽन्तराय सहस्रेणाप्यप्रतिबद्धो निरन्तर प्रेमप्रवाहः

[7] मद्गुणश्रुतिमात्रेण मयि सर्व गुहाशये ।
मनोगतिरविच्छिन्ना यथा गङ्गाम्भसोऽम्बुधौ ॥
Bhagavata, III. 29. 11-12.

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attainment it is : 'You talk glibly about prema. But is it such a commonplace thing? There are two characteristics of Prema. First it makes one forget the world. So intense is one's love for God that one becomes unconscious of outer things. Chaitanya had this ecstatic love, he, 'took a wood for the sacred grove of Vrindavana and the ocean for the dark waters of the Jamuna'. Second one has no feeling of my-ness toward the body, which is so dear to man. One wholly gets rid of the feeling that the body is the soul.'[8]

And what is the way to attain such bhakti? 'Attaining to this supreme love is possible only by giving up the objective reality of the world as it appears to the ego-centric intellect and senses and the consequent renunciation of attachment.'[9] 'First of all cultivating and preserving virtues such as non-violence, truth, purity, compassion, faith in spiritual realities and the like, and then by worshipping always the Lord alone free from all anxieties of life in every respect, can a devotee hope to be blessed with the realization of the Supreme,'[10] says Narada. Renunciation of desires we therefore see is the foundation of the edifice of bhakti.

What is Jnana? According to the *Upanishads* the only Reality is Brahman. The Universe is unreal. The Jiva is none other than Brahman. To know, to understand by experience the nature of our inner being as Brahman is jnana. By this jnana (knowledge), not the theoretical but the practical intuitive experience, *aparokshanubhuti*, we go across this world of dualities, of birth and death. All the scriptures are there only to help us go across this ocean of misery. All miseries last until, due to ignorance, we identify ourselves with the body, senses or the mind. But Atman is none of these, so the miseries of the body do not affect it in any way. Therefore, as soon as the false identification drops off, the miseries also cease to torment us. This our identification with the body etc. is like the identification by the tiger in the parable of Sri Ramakrishna with the sheep. A teacher is necessary to impart this knowledge. He, who by the grace of the teacher has attained such direct experience of the Atman, goes beyond this ocean of misery.[11] A knower of Brahman attains the Highest.[12] This in short is knowledge and the fruit of acquiring such knowledge.

What are the practices that lead to this goal? The *prakarana* treatises such as the *Vedantasara* and *Vivekachudamani* say that four things are necessary as the preliminary outfit for a person entering the path of jnana. They are (1) discrimination, (2) dispassion towards things worldly and heavenly, (3) possession of the six virtues such as control of the inner and outer senses, forbearance, faith and the like, and (4) an intense desire for liberation. The jnani starts discriminating that Brahman alone is real, all other things are unreal. Dispassion develops with discrimination. With the dawn of dispassion control over the body and senses is practised, and then alone true desire for liberation arises in the mind.

Now let us compare and see whether there is any appreciable difference in the essentials either in the preliminaries, practices or goal of these two paths : bhakti (devotion) and jnana (knowledge). The goal of each is to obtain unqualified Bliss. The bhakta enjoys that in the presence of his Chosen Ideal, and the jnani in the realization of Atman as Brahman. Once reaching that goal neither of them get any taste for the worldly things. Secondly as we have seen both of these paths emphasize that the goal cannot be reached if there is the least trace of body-consciousness in the aspirants. A bhakta has to be as much compassionate and

[8] *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, II Edition, p. 137.

[9] तत्तु विषयत्यागात् सङ्गत्यागात् च ॥
N. B. Sutras. 35.

[10] अहिंसा सत्यशौचादयास्तिक्यदि चारित्र्याणि परिपालनीयानि । सर्वदा सर्वभावेन निश्चिन्तैः भगवानेव भजनीयः ।
N. B. Sutras. 78-79.

[11] तरति शोकं आत्मवित् ॥ *Chandogya Up.* 7. 1. 3.

[12] ब्रह्मविदाप्नोति परम् ॥ *Taitt. Up.* 2. 1. 1.

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forbearing as the jnani. The jnani discards the world and worldly pleasures as evanescent and does not enjoy it. The bhakta accepts the world only as his Beloved's creation and not for enjoyment. His enjoyment is only in his Beloved Lord's company. Thus both cultivate dispassion though their modes are different. As long as there is the least desire for things worldly neither the bhakta is granted his Beloved Lord's vision nor can the jnani realize his identity with Brahman.

Sri Krishna gives the definition of a true bhakta in the Gita thus : 'one who does not get elated, nor hates, nor gets depressed, nor desires, one who renounces good as well as evil, he, a good devotee, is dear to me. Alike to foe and friend, in honour and dishonour, in cold and heat, in happiness and misery, free from attachment, satisfied with anything, without a home and of steady mind — such a devotee is dear to me.'[13] Every one of these qualities are equally applicable to the jnani. If he falls short of any of these he can't attain to the Highest. Shankara commenting on this passage says that such a state as described by the Lord is possible only for a jnani. Commenting on bhakti in another instance he says it is the continuous flow of thought on the real nature of one's own Atman.[14] The sage Sandilya in his *Bhaktimimamsa* holds that bhakti should be without prejudice to the delight in the Atman. Again Sri Krishna describes the devotees thus : 'Four classes of people to whose credit there are some good actions, worship Me. They are (1) those beset with danger, (2) the inquirers, (3) those desirous of wealth etc., and (4) the man of knowledge. Among them only the man of knowledge being always established in Me and having one-pointed devotion excels and for that person of knowledge I am the dearest and he is dear to me.'[15] On another occasion he says, *Jnani tu atmaiva me matam*, 'I think that a jnani is My own Self.' It is therefore obvious that only one who has fully understood that there is nothing worth struggling for except God can devote himself to God, either by love or by knowledge according to his temperament. He alone can be a true bhakta or a true jnani. One who has attained the summit of jnana or bhakti finds that his goal has been the same as that of the other though the path had differed a little. Sri Sankara in his Vishnu-shatpadi stotra prays : 'O Lord, even when all duality vanish I can only be Thine and not Thou mine, for the waves can belong to the sea and not the sea to the waves.'[16] So there is not the desire for power in the jnani when he says, 'I am Brahman.' These all arise in the lower stages only.

Therefore viewed from any angle we cannot conscientiously posit that one is contradictory to the other. On the other hand the various opinions of the sages and Incarnations quoted above go to prove that they are, if any thing, complementary to one another. Nay, pure Knowledge and pure Love are one and the same, says Sri Ramakrishna. Further Sri Ramakrishna found that there was the fear of mere devotion developing into emotionalism and mere jnana turning into dry intellectualism, so, in order to avoid the two extremes, he said : 'The Path for this age is devotion combined with knowledge.' If we be sincere we need not find fault with or hate the other, for hatred is the enemy of both the paths. Let us learn this and bury the hatchet once and for all.

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[13] यो न हृष्यति न द्वेष्टि न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।
शुभाशुभपरित्यागी भक्तिमान्यः स मे प्रियः ॥
समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च तथा मानापमानयोः ।
शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु समः सङ्गविवर्जितः ॥
तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिर्मौनी संतुष्टो येन केनचित् ।
अनिकेतः स्थिरमतिर्भक्तिमान्मे प्रियो नरः ॥
B. Gita, XII. 17-19.

[14] स्वस्वरूपानुसंधानं भक्तिरित्यभिधीयते ।
Vivekachudamani, 31.

[15] चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनोऽर्जुन ।
आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ ॥
तेषां ज्ञानी नित्ययुक्त एक भक्तिर्विशिष्यते ।
प्रियो हि ज्ञानिनोऽत्यर्थमहं स च मम प्रियः ॥
B. Gita, VII. 16-17.

[16] सत्यपि भेदापगमे नाथ तवाहं न मामकीनस्त्वम् ।
सामुद्रोहि तरङ्गः क्वचन समुद्रो न तारङ्गः ॥

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RELIGIOUS PRACTICE IN THE HOUSE-HOLD *

SWAMI VISHUDDHANANDA

Man's relationship with God is of a permanent nature, — eternal. First God and then everything else. We have forgotten this. The Upanishads also teach us the same thing : *Tadetat preyah putrat, preyo vittat, preyo anyasmat.*

For what is our attachment in the world? — for wealth, name, fame and all that. But One who is residing in the inner recesses of our heart, is much dearer than all these. So, He is to be worshipped as the most dear one. Really, first God and then this world. First the digit one and then the zeros. We have forgotten this. First God, because He only has given us everything. We have a duty in return. This basic principle we forget. Keeping this idea in mind 'first God and then this world,' one should conduct oneself in life. All these attractions for the family, for the children are due to God, for He has created them. Without Him there is nothing. Everything in this world exists due to His will only. All these things will go again at His bidding. He has created all these beings of the world and our duty is to attend on them. Think that every being and thing is His and that He is in everything. Consider how much love one should possess to realise this truth! Ponder over it. Why does not that passionate love for God arise? Why don't we have that attraction for God? Because of the pull of the world, for many lives this attachment for the world, for the family, for property, for wealth etc. had been there in us and it has been our nature to think all these as our own. Mind has to be lifted to a higher state. Sri Ramakrishna said : First apply oil to the hands and then break open the jack-fruit, otherwise its milk would stick to the palms making it very difficult to cleanse the hands. But if the palm is already rubbed with oil, then the milk does not stick at all. Even if it sticks, a little effort can remove it. Worldly attachment is like this sticky milk.

Now what is this oil? It is the love, the devotion, the adoration, and the feeling of being attached to God. God is eternally our own. Attachment and love for the world, everything will remain. These have been placed in us by Him. Otherwise how can the world go on? Can we be unfeeling like the wall, brick, wood or stones? Love, affection and fellow-feeling constitute the support of this world. Will there be a complete banishment of love and affection from this world? Certainly not. We have to conduct ourselves in this world with the same love, affection and fellow-feeling, service to children and husband should be rendered with the same spirit, but at the same time remember that God is the bestower of all these gifts. But the difficulty with us is that in the course of our duty to this world we get entangled into everything. We cannot get rid of this attachment. For that purpose only, there is the counsel to break-open the jack-fruit of this world after applying the oil of devotion.

Let friendliness, love, affection, attraction and all other things for the world, be there, otherwise it will not be possible to attend to our duties in this world. As against this should we not also offer our love and affection to God? It is a fact, that we are not able to offer Him the same love, we do not feel that we are as near to Him as we do with regard to the things worldly.

But then it may be asked, what would happen if one is devoted to God? In that case while doing these duties you will not be attached to this world, the milk of the jack-fruit would not stick to you. Again with the same affection and love sit for His puja, or japam, or meditation or prayer. We have not

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learnt this, hence the above teaching of Sri Ramakrishna.

If the hands are oiled the milk will not stick. As we attend to the world so seriously, in the same way we have to perform some greater duty to God too. Surely we have some duty to Him who has given all these things of the world to us and to whom this universe belongs. At the time of worship we try to call on God but we fail, because of the attachments to the relations like son, husband etc. which keep us bound. How terse, yet beautiful is this illustration of Sri Ramakrishna.

Get yourself free from this attachment, sit for His worship with all feeling and love, and call on Him. This love for God is the real necessity. Whoever it is, husband, or children, all of them induce bondage. Don't you see the truth of all these remarks, with regard to your own family? If that little exchange of fellow feeling is not there between one another then the world will be dry altogether; you all know this. Many a time we hear a boy telling his mother, 'Mother, you do not love me as before.' He talks like this because he is not getting the same affection which he expects. Husband would be complaining against the wife, 'You are something different now.' Naturally it seems the attraction of this world is in this fellow-feeling or affection. For this purpose only, there is love, affection and fellowship amongst each other in this world. You don't have the same feeling for God — Have you? He is in all, in everything. We have forgotten this fact. We think too much of the physical relationship. As a result we cannot see things beyond it. So we are to rouse ourselves again to that ideal feeling of fellowship, love and affection. Sublimating it we have to offer it to God. This, the Gita teaches in so many ways and repeatedly. 'Be detached, love Me.' Sri Ramakrishna has given a beautiful illustration as to how to live in this world: that of the king-fisher. The king-fisher dives into the water. As it flies back and shakes its wings they become dry in no time.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say, live in this world like a mud-fish. Though it lives in the mud, mud does not at all stick to the smooth scales of its body. From detachment arises devotion, love, affection etc. Can't we render all these things to God? We are doing everything in this world with a feeling of love. We are extending our love even to the cats and dogs. Can we not then bestow a little of that love to God?

Realise that as you have come, so you will go. Naked you came into this world and empty handed you go back. You have come from some unknown land and back you go again into the same unknown! All our efforts are in and for this transitory stage, in between this 'coming' and 'going'. But God is ever existent. He is the support of everyone amongst us. We all are in Him. He is our destination. After all this world is not our goal. The question then is how are we to live in this world? God comes first, He is to be loved before all. Then only we can perform our duty towards them who are also living with us in this world. For God is both here in this world and in the world beyond. Always, He is our very own. Look at your children, at times He gives them, at times He takes them back; again who knows when and whom He will call! For that you are to remain prepared. This is the Truth. Never forget this.

Again you may ask, how are we to live in this world? Sri Ramakrishna used to say, like that expert carpenter-lady: while the paddy is pounded with one hand she stirs it, picks it up now and then to see whether it is properly done, attends the customer, keeps a watch on the accounts and arrears of the customers, and while doing all this work she would suckle the child also. How many works she is attending to simultaneously! But where is her mind all the while? — On the pestle (so that the hand may not get crushed). This is to be practised. One cannot become like her in a day.

Take another illustration of Sri Ramakrishna: The mother-tortoise swims in water, but her mind all the time is thinking about the

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eggs she had left on the shore. This is the real attitude to be cultivated. God is our goal and our all in all. We should remember this. This is to be practised in spite of our daily activities. Will it be possible to achieve it by doing japa or meditation for an hour or a single day? No. Amidst work you are always to be in communion with Him. How is it possible? Only if you love Him, otherwise not. We must not forget this, because everything of this world has stuck to us like the milk of the jack-fruit. You are to think out all these and do sadhana (practice). Sri Ramakrishna has shown how that practice is to be done amidst daily activities. Remember the Lord, and then do whatever you like to do, says he.

We are to remember God, and then do all our daily duties of life. We are to do this always. Bhagavan Sri Krishna says in the battle field of Kurukshetra (to Arjuna): *Tasmat sarveśu kaleśu mamanusmara yudhya cha*, — 'Therefore, in pleasure and pain, amidst weal and woe, remember Me and go on doing your duty.' This is the path that we should follow, but here itself we blunder. We are to do our duties seeking refuge in Him and calling on Him only. Without practice this is impossible. Particularly in an atmosphere of enjoyment this idea does not come. So the company of holy men is necessary.

Holy company is a great thing. In the language of Sri Ramakrishna, 'it is like correcting the watch.' Those who used to visit Sri Ramakrishna could understand from His words, — how far their mind was drawn towards material enjoyment and how far away from God they were. By looking at a holy person discrimination dawns on us. Discrimination tells you how far you have drifted away from God, and then only the mind-clock could be checked and regulated. Know that the company of holy men is an important thing in your life.

The company of holy men arouses understanding. Sri Ramakrishna often used to say: faith in God and love for God are awakened by company of the holy. We can attain God-realisation also. Why is it not achieved? Because our mind is in the bondage of the senses. Mind is not under our control. So what are we to do? By keeping company with holy men the mind which is mortgaged to the senses, comes back to its own. Always remember that the company of holy men is very essential.

Another thing you ought to remember. You should ponder, for sometime at least, over what you daily hear. As soon as you finish your listening, you get up and start gossiping on all sorts of subjects. You do not even recollect properly what you have heard. You listen to mechanically but do not think or meditate upon it. What a difficult 'samskara' (tendency)! If good samskaras are cultivated, bad ones drop away. You listen, but do not actually retain it. Rumination is required. As Sri Ramakrishna used to say 'the cow eats its bellyful, and then at its leisure starts chewing the cud.' This you should practise in your daily life — (i.e., to meditate upon the words of holy men). Otherwise simply listening and immediately forgetting won't bring any result. Practise in this way and you will see that the other samskaras gradually drop away, your *rajasik* constitution will become *sattvik* and it will lead you towards God. Practise it in your daily life, do your duty in this way only and then you will find your mind is steadily moving up to the *sattvik* level.

Make your mind holy and pure by thinking about the Lord and His lila and by keeping company with holy men. These are the disciplines to be followed, otherwise, the mind will oscillate between the two extremes, the low and the high. That is the reason why the Lord has said in the Gita: *sarveśu kaleśu mamanusmara yudhya cha*. Sri Ramakrishna also used to say, all the work is to be done keeping our mind in Him only. The tortoise moves in the water but its mind is left on the shore where its eggs are. The village lady is engaged in so many works, but most of her attention is over the pestle. You are also to do the worldly

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duties depositing a part of your mind in Him, — daily you have to practise this.

From the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna we learn this important lesson that for those who are placed in the world it is impossible to completely detach the mind from the *samsara*. Gita also teaches, take the name of God and go on fighting. All should practise this, for religion is a thing to be experienced. God exists and He should be experienced. You have to experience God-love and because that is not done, the world is so much in turmoil. His is the world. Naturally it is to be experienced and shared along with Him. Just now you have heard so many things but perhaps the whole thing you will forget again. So you need the company of holy men to renew it. When you do not come across holy men, read good books. Whatever you hear, think over it, recall and practise.

Do your duty in the world as you are doing; you are to progress from the position where you are presently in, and for that incessantly call on God.

FROM THE TREE OF DIVINE LORE

The enchanting summit of the Lord of Mountains, resplendent with all its various jewels, clad with many a tree and many a creeper, melodious with the song of many a bird, scented with the fragrance of all seasons' flowers, fanned by soft, cool breezes, it was there that Parvati, finding Siva, Her gracious Lord, in mood serene, with obeisance bent low and questioned Him, the Silent Deva, 'Say, O Lord! for the good of the world, what men should or should not do, according to their different castes and stages of life.'

Having heard the words of the Devi, Sankara, the Ocean of Mercy, He who is white as camphor and jasmine flower, whose raiment is space itself, Lord of the poor and the beloved and loving Master of all yogis, the Three-eyed One, the Bestower of eternal Liberation thus truly spoke:

'O Blissful One, I have already foretold in the Vedas, Smritis and Puranas that in this age the wise shall worship the Devas according to the method enjoined in the Agamas. In this Age the Mantras of the Tantras are efficacious, yield immediate fruit, and are auspicious for Japa, Yajna and all such practices and ceremonies. The Vedic rites and Mantras were fruitful in the Satya and other ages, but in the Kali age they are as if dead.

'O Parameswari! should good be done to the universe, the Lord of the universe is pleased, since He is its Self, and it depends on Him. He is One. He ever is. He is the Truth. He is Eternal Consciousness and Bliss.

'O Parvati! When the Kali age is made manifest, all Dharma is enfeebled and Truth alone remains: therefore one should be truthful. Oh Virtuous One! know this for certain, that whatsoever man does with Truth, that bears fruit. There is no Dharma higher than Truth, there is no sin greater than falsehood; therefore should man seek protection under Truth with all his soul. Worship without Truth is useless, and so too, without Truth is Japa of Mantras and Tapas.

'Truth is the appearance of the Supreme Brahman; Truth is the most excellent of all Tapas; every act is rooted in Truth. There is nothing more excellent than *Truth*.'

(*Mahanirvana Tantra*)

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LORD BUDDHA AND HIS TEACHINGS

HEMANTA KUMAR SEN

India is the cradle of many religions of which Buddhism is one. The object of this article is to present before the readers the essentials of the teachings of Lord Buddha to enable them to understand their spirit.

'Abstain from doing evil, ceaselessly do good, keep the heart clean.' This is the exhortation of the Buddha.

Buddha's pre-existence

It appears from Palijataka that the Prince of Kapilavastu in one of his previous births in a rich Brahmin family, bore the name of Sumedha and received Vedic education. On the premature death of his father, he inherited a large fortune, which he distributed amongst the poor and the needy and repaired to the Himalayas to meditate with a view to disentangle himself from the vicious circle of births and deaths. The Buddha Dipankara made a prophecy at the time that in a future birth Sumedha would be born in a Kshatriya family as the son of Raja Suddhodana and his royal consort Maya at the city of Kapilavastu and that he would renounce the world to attain the supreme state of Buddha.

The Ten Perfections.

This prophecy strengthened the determination of the ascetic Sumedha, and he practised the following Ten Perfections, called Paramitas to attain conditions necessary for the consummation of his dearly cherished ideal.

1. '*Dana* — Absolute charity, even to the sacrificing of one's life.
2. *Sila* — The observance of the rules of perfect bodily and mental purity, never deviating from the path of moral perfection.
3. *Nekkhamma* — Renunciation of all lustful desires, sacrificing self for the welfare and happiness of others, life after life, till perfection is reached.
4. *Panna* or *Pragna* — Acquiring wisdom from whatever source, high or low.
5. *Viriya* or *Virya* — Heroic exertions, undaunted courage, persevering to the end till perfection is achieved.
6. *Khanti* or *Kshanti* — Forgiving, patience, enduring all things, never showing repugnance or anger.
7. *Sacca* or *Satya* — Absolute truthfulness, unswerving in the path of truth.
8. *Adhittpana or Adhisthana* — Immovable like the mountain peak; never deviating from the path of virtue, but resolved to achieve the cherished desire.
9. *Metta* or *Maitri* — Infinite love to all alike, like the love the mother entertains towards her only son.
10. *Upekkha* or *Upeksha* — Equanimity, showing a spirit of equal-mindedness to friend or foe alike, like the earth that receives whatever is thrown upon her.'

Sumedha practised these virtues in his, the then and subsequent existences before he was born as Prince Siddhartha on the full moon day of Vaisakha (April-May) in the royal park of Lumbini 2,500 years ago.

Why the Prince chose the life of an ascetic?

Rishi Kaladeva, who came to bless the royal babe, observed that the child would in future become the omniscient Buddha. But Raja Suddhodana desiring that his son would succeed him in the throne, brought him up in right royal style in a garden of beautiful palaces in the midst of luxurious and attractive surroundings taking all possible precaution that signs of decay and death might not meet the eyes of the Prince suggesting the transitory nature of all earthly existences. He sought the hands of the beautiful princess Yasodhara in a svayamvara contest while both of them were in sixteen summers. A son was born to them 13 years later; when the whole city was plunged in the mirth of merriment, prince Siddhartha entered the city with his royal charioteer Channa. But in spite of all precautions the sights of (a) an old man, and

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(b) a sick man, as well as that of a (c) corpse unhinged his mind when the charioteer explained to the Prince that old age, disease and death were the usual course of an earthly existence from which no mortal could be immune. But the beaming countenance of a Bhikshu wearing a saffron cloth, restored the usual serenity of his mind and he decided to take the path of renunciation the same night. His craving for Nirvana was further accentuated when he heard a Sakya Princess Kisagotami sing a song from the balcony of her palace with a verse having the word 'nibbuta' (nirvana) recurring in each line.

Later on, when the beautiful maidens engaged to cheer up the Prince with their dances and music, fell into a slumber, Siddhartha ordered his charioteer to saddle his royal charger Kanthaka, and entered the royal apartment to have just a look at the Princess Yasodhara and her son Rahula before he took the bowl, renouncing the golden cup.

Leaving the city and having crossed the river Anoma on the way Siddhartha ordered Channa to return home with the royal robes and the horse. He cut his long locks of hair with his sword, exchanged his dress with the yellow apparel of Brahmaghatikara, who came in disguise as a hunter and walked with the hunter's bowl in hand as far as Rajagraha in Magadha, the capital of the King Bimbisara. He took shelter in a cave in the Pandava hill, and begged his food from the house-holders. Being apprised of his antecedents Bimbisara tried in vain to persuade Siddhartha to share half of his Kingdom. The unbending attitude of Siddhartha impressed the king who implored the renunciate to grace him with a visit when he attained enlightenment.

Sadhana and Austerity

Leaving the Pandava hill the recluse remained for sometime with the Rishis Atarkalama and Uddaka Ramaputra, and learned everything that they had to teach; but these could not satisfy his craving for nirvana. Thereafter he practised severe austerities taking only a grain of rice a day for nearly six years with five other Brahman Bikshus at the beautiful sylvan spot in Uruvela, near the river Niranjara. He was so reduced by privation that he fell down unconscious one day, and commenced to take food again to gain bodily strength so that he might bear the strain of meditation. Thereupon the five Bhikshus deserted him thinking that he had resorted to the life of luxury.

But Siddhartha continued to make a steady progress in the path of realisation of the Absolute Truth, and on the night previous, he had a dream signifying 'Knock, the door will open'. As the day dawned ushering in rotation the full-moon day of Vaisakha, Siddhartha sat at the root of the Ajapala Banyan tree where Sujata, a daughter of the village chief, Senani, offered him the milk food boiled with rice which he took after taking an ablution in the river. Passing the noon in a grove of Sal trees on its bank, he repaired to the spot where the Bodhi tree stood as the sinking sun's radiant lines disappeared behind the rocks and seated himself with the solemn resolution :

> 'Let derma, bones, and fleeting flesh dissolve;
> And yet, until the mysteries of life I solve,
> And receive the all coveted Priceless Lore,
> From this place, I shall stir, never, never,
> more.' [1]

Gatha or Victory

Mara, the god of lust, with his attractive and gay troupe made serious but vain attempts to seduce the Bodhisatva Siddhartha to the comforts of sense satisfaction; but the ascetic remained adamant and ultimately triumphed over Kama. Full-moon flooded him with full illumination and he attained the supreme state of *Annuttara-Samma-Sambodhi.* The Buddha then uttered the *gatha* of victory :

> 'Many a House of Life
> Hath held me
> Seeking ever him who wrought
> Those prisons of the senses sorrow-fraught;
> Sore was my ceaseless strife!
> But now,

[1] 'Whispers from Eternity' by Paramahamsa Yogananda.

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Thou Builder of this Tabernacle
Thou !
I know thee,
Never shalt Thou build again
These walls of pain,
Nor raise the roof-tree of deceits
Nor lay fresh rafters on the clay;
Broken Thy house is, and the ridge-pole split !
Delusion fashioned it !
Safe pass I thence
Deliverance to obtain.'

(*Light of Asia*)

The Law of Dependent Causation

Having attained the supreme state of Bodhi, Gautama revolved in his mind in the first week the great Law of Dependent causation, otherwise called the twelve *nidanas,* or the root causes, operating in three inter-dependent categories and linked together, thus making the individualised being the effect of his own *karma.* He reaps what he has sown, and sows in the way of generating fresh karma that he may reap hereafter. The twelve *nidanas* are :

1. '*Avijja* — Ignorance of the four noble truths, ignorance of the 24 laws of cosmic phenomena and the laws of righteousness.
2. *Sankhara* — Ideations in the planes of good, evil, and neither good nor bad karma; and karmic action produced by word, deed or thought.
3. *Vinnana* — Operating consciousness of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind in their totality.
4. *Nama-rupa* — Nama and rupa, the latter consisting of the body, the former sense feelings (vedana) ; perceptions (sanna) and ideations (sankharas). Body (rupa) is made of the four elements : (a) earth, (b) water, (c) fire and (d) air.
5. *Satayatana* — Six seats of consciousness mentioned under Vinnana.
6. *Phasso* — Contact caused by each of the sense organs with objective forms, sound, smells, tastes, bodily touch and subjective recollections.
7. *Vedana* — Three aspects of feeling or the sensations caused by *vinnana* in contact with *satayatanas,* which are threefold : (a) pleasant, (b) unpleasant and (c) neither pleasant nor unpleasant.
8. *Tanha* — The threefold desires for sense enjoyment in the planes of (a) *kama,* (b) *bhava* and (c) *vibhava.* Tanha is caused by stimulating the sense organs in co-operation with *vinnana.*
9. *Uposana* — Attachment to sense pleasures ; attachment to morbid ascetic habits ; attachment to unscientific beliefs ; attachment to an ego or self.
10. *Bhavo* — Fertilising fields in the planes of *kama, rupa* and *arupa. Kama* is the world of sense pleasures, celestial or human ; *rupa* is the world of the Brahmas obtained by the practice of the four *ghanas* (*dhyanas*) ; *arupa* is the perceptions in potential form obtained by the practice of the *vimokkhas* or transcendental insight.
11. *Jati* — Birth in the seven states where individualised consciousness operates.
12. *Jara-marana* — Decay and death ; *soka* — sorrow ; *parideva* — lamentation ; *duksha* — pain ; *domanassa* — grief ; and *upayasa* — despair.

The Lord observed :

'when the doctrine of Dependent causation becomes clear to the ardent meditating Brahmana, then all his doubts fade away, since he has realised what is the cause and effect of phenomena, and when he has understood the cessation of causation he stands like the sun illuminating the sky, dispelling the hosts of evil.'

Who is Brahmana ?

In the second week the Lord remained standing in ecstasy of the bliss of Absolute Truth, realised by Him ; and he spent in meditation the third week in a cluster of trees. In the fourth week sitting at the root of the Ajapala Banyan tree he spoke of Brahman to an inquisitive Brahmin. The Tathagatha remarked :

'He who has renounced all sinfulness, who is free from impurity, who possesses self-restraint, who is an accomplished master of the Vedas, who has fulfilled the duties of holiness, who has no attachment to things of the world, such a man may justly call himself a Brahmana.'

This observation of the Lord refutes the common belief that the Buddha was a *Veda-drohi.* He spent the fifth week at the Machalinda lake in enjoyment of transcendental bliss in solitude. He spent the sixth week under the Rajayatana tree where the two merchants

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Tapassa and Bhallaka paid him homage. He spent the seventh week under the Ajapala Banyan tree when He resolved to preach Buddhism in response to Brahmā's request.

The Golden mean

The Blessed one leaving Uruvela proceeded towards Banaras and met on the way Upaka, a naked ascetic of the Ajivaka sect, who received illumination from Him. The Tathagata wandering on foot from place to place met the five Bhikshus, who were formerly his companions and subsequently abandoned Him, at Deer Park, Isipatana, Banaras, and out of compassion preached to them the efficacy of the Middle Path leading to insight, wisdom, peace, enjoyment and to 'Nibbana'. He advised them to avoid the two extremes, viz. (a) 'a life given to sensual pleasure (Kama Yoga), which is low, vulgar, earthly, ignoble and profitless; and (b) a life of asceticism, which is painful, ignoble and unprofitable.'

The Middle Path : Majjhima Patipada i.e., the Noble Eightfold Middle Path, preached by the Lord are enunciated below :

1. '*Sammaditthi* — Right realisation of the four noble Truths and of the law of causes and effects (Karma and Rebirth etc.).
2. *Samma Sankappo* — Right thoughts of love, of compassion, and of renunciation of lustful pleasures engendering self-love.
3. *Samma Vaca* — Right speech, abstaining from falsehood, slander, harsh words, and gossip, and speaking words of truth, gentleness and concord.
4. *Samma Kammanto* — Right action, abstaining from destroying life, stealing and sensual indulgency.
5. *Samma Ajivo* — Right means of livelihood — abstaining from slave trade, from selling animals for food, from selling intoxicants and poisons, and murderous weapons.
6. *Samma Vayamo* — Right exertion to prevent evil arising to eradicate evil already arisen, to generate meritorious deeds, to increase and develop meritorious deeds already arisen.
7. *Samma Sati* — Right mindfulness, biological analysis of the constituents of the body, analysis of sensations, analysis of the metabolism of ideations, analysis of the five obstacles of conscious concentration, analysis of the five skandhas, analysis of the six seats of consciousness.
8. *Samma Samadhi* — Right realisation of the four jhanas (dhyanas) and living in a cheerfully conscious state of perfect equanimity. When in this state the Yogi is able to acquire the six mystical powers of (a) divine hearing, (b) divine sight, (c) looking into the past for many millions of births, (d) reading the thoughts of gods and men, (e) working phenomena or "miracles", and (f) acquiring knowledge to realise consciously that he shall be reborn no more.'

Four noble truths

The four noble truths that we have to realize are :

(i) 'The existence of pain (Dukka) : (a) Birth is painful, (b) illness is painful, (c) death is painful, (d) presence of objects that we dislike is painful, (e) separation from objects that we love is painful, (f) not to obtain what we like is painful, and (g) clinging to the five elements of existence is painful.

(ii) The cause of pain — Egoistic desires that lead to rebirth, viz. (a) desire for sense pleasure, (b) desire for celestial pleasure, and (c) desire for personal annihilation.

(iii) The cessation of pain — Destruction of ignorance and egoistic desires (tanha) leads to the cessation of pain, which is Nibbana.

(iv) The sublime way — The Noble Eightfold path, as enumerated above.'

A Nirvana-kami walking in the Noble Eightfold Path has to think incessantly of the three characteristic signs immutable in the cosmic process viz. (a) that everything in the universe is breaking up with radio-active rapidity; (b) that there is pain eventually caused by this disintegration; and (c) that there is no permanent Ego or an 'I-amness' in anything which we foolishly call 'mine.' The continual meditation on these characteristics moulds the mind to forget one's Ego, and stimulates the mind for positive ethical virtues of self-abnegation . . . Buddhist Ethics may, therefore, be called Disinterested Aesthetic Ethics.

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Bodhi Pakhya Dhamma

The Nibbana Dhamma is again categorised under the thirty-seven principles of the Bodhi Pakhya Dhamma which are as follows :

1. 'The four states of analysis (*satipathanas*) are included in the seventh principle of the eightfold path' (explained above).

2. 'The four *Iddhipada* conditions necessary for the requirement of psychical and higher faculties, are (a) the desire for development, (b) the necessary exertion, (c) purifying the heart and (d) self-analysis.'

3. 'The four sammappadhanas are included in the sixth principle of the eight-fold path.'

4. 'The five Indriyas or the organs of spirituality are (a) faith required by the study of the psychical science in the Pali texts ; (b) the power of attentiveness developed by a special process of training the mind and body ; (c) exertion as above ; (d) acquirement of the wisdom leading to *nibbana* and (e) development of Samadhi.'

5. 'The five *balas* or the powers of spirituality are same as above.'

6. 'The seven principles of wisdom (Bojjjhanga) are : (i) External watchfulness by the practice of the analysing process ; (ii) study of the essentials of the teachings enumerated in the different categories of the Buddha's doctrine ; (iii) development of the spirit of cheerfulness by aesthetic habits ; (iv) Exertion to progress in the higher path ; (v) mental equilibrium, not letting it go to unlimited ecstasy, nor into melancholia ; (vi) Development of the power of concentration in the practice of Samadhi, and (vii) perfect equanimity uninfluenced by the four biases viz., (a) partiality, (b) anger, (c) fear and (d) infatuation.'

7. 'The Noble Eightfold Path as enumerated above.'

For forty-five years the Tathagata preached the tenets of Buddhism to the people of the Gangetic valley, watered by Ganges and the Jamuna, the sacred land of the Buddhas. 'Kings and ministers were objects of compassion to Him equally with the poor and the rich. Even an abandoned woman and the leper were objects of his tender solicitude. Whatever He uttered was only for the welfare and happiness of the many.' He was born to bring happiness to the care-worn world and to save humanity. Any one, inquisitive to know more of the absolute nature of the Tathagata's teachings, will do well to go through the sacred suttas of the Pali Texts — the Vinaya Pitaka, the Sutta Pitaka, and the Abhidhamma Pitaka.

The last day : After taking a dish of pork, some say a dish of sakra (mushroom) offered by a devotee, the Tathagata contracted illness and entered into pari-nirvana on the Vaisakhi Purnima at the age of 80 years. So unbounded was his compassion for mankind that even at the crucial moment of his casting away the mortal garb, he bore cheerfully the strain of rising four times from his death-bed to dispel the gloom from the minds of inquisitive persons, seeking illumination at his blessed feet. Blessed be the Lord whose heart overflowed with the milk of compassion for the animate world !

Indications are that the world aims to be moving towards peace and may the Prince of Peace lead kindly light to re-inforce the peace movement so that the people may respond heartily to the Biblical saying, 'Blessed are the Peace-makers.'

The Hindus have accepted Shakya Muni as God and worship him. But the real difference that we Hindus want to show between modern Buddhism and what we should understand as the teachings of Lord Buddha lies principally in this : Shakya Muni came to preach nothing new. He also, like Jesus, came to fulfil and not to destroy. . . . As the Jew did not understand the fulfilment of the Old Testament, so the Buddhist did not understand the fulfilment of the truths of the Hindu religion. Again, I repeat, Shakya Muni came not to destroy, but he was the fulfilment, the logical conclusion, the logical development of the religion of the Hindus. — SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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ETHICS IN THE PRE-UPANISHADIC THOUGHT

VISHWANATH PRASAD VARMA

To the superficial European critic of Indian Culture there is no important place for ethics in it inasmuch as the philosophy of *maya* or world-illusionism involves the reduction of all actions, good or bad, to nullity[1] and the transcendent absolute, removed from all cosmic dualities and ethical conflicts is to be attained not by the perfection of moral character but by the knowledge of the identity of the immanental and psychic entities.[2] He states that in the Indian systems of thought moral perfection is regarded as belonging to the earthly regions which are a product of *maya*. He emphasizes that at best morality according to Indian thought is only a way — *mārga* or *naya* or *yāna*, to produce knowledge and is not something of absolute worth in itself.[3] Schweitzer has criticized Hindu ethics as being world-negating. Melamed writes :

> 'In Western religiosity . . . man and God are pictured as being in opposition to each other. The myths of Prometheus and of Heraclitus in ancient Greece, as well as the myth of the flood in the Bible testify to an intense conflict between man and God. Even Christianity stresses the contradistinction between man and God. In the individualistic West, God is endowed with personality, which creates a state of tension between Himself and man. This conflict between God and man gives birth to ethics. In ancient India, however, God, constituting only eternal being and bereft of all personality, does not contain the possibility of ethics.'[4]

But this is not a correct representation of the place of ethics in ancient India. The Vedantic realization is regarded as the culmination of the most rigorous ethical discipline.[5] The Kathopanishad[6] states in emphatic terms :

नाविरतो दुश्चरितात् नाशान्तो नासमाहितः ।
नाशान्तमानसो वापि प्रज्ञानेनैनमाप्नुयात् ॥
(I-2. 24)

The Hindu thinkers never confounded the highest absolute view with the relative empirical standpoint. The positing of a transcendent utter being is not tantamount to the sanctioning of an impure way of life. If it were so, a similar charge could be made against physical realism, positivism and materialism. Because scientific materialism would preach the ultimate and sole reality of electrons and protons, nobody can pretend to be indifferent to good and evil, on the ground that in the final analysis everything is the quantitative and qualitative representation of electronic movements.

It will be wild to believe that the ancient Hindus, who fought the battle of Mahabharata, who created the Maurya and the Gupta empires, and whose achievements in art and logic, sculpture and architecture, poetry and positive sciences still strike the imagination of the world by their colossal greatness, were mere speculators engrossed in the subtleties of *maya* and neglected the imperative demands of a sane and sober life and social order. Buddha who instructed his disciples to spread his message of evangelisation to the whole humanity was not a mere *mayavadi*. The philosophical standpoints of the Hindus — illusionism or mentalism, idealism or solipsism, scepticism, naturalism or realism — never col-

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1 Lanman, *Beginnings of Hindu Pantheism*, p. 24 : 'What a prospect — dark and void — this Supreme Spirit before whom all human endeavour, all noble ambition, all hope, all love is flighted ! What a contrast, a relief, when we turn from this to the teachings of the gentle Nazarene.'

2 A. B. Keith, *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads*, Vol. II, pp. 598, 596.

3 Paul Deussen, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads*, p. 362. Also *Mundaka*, III, 2, 2 ; *Katha*, VI, 11 ; *Brihadaranyaka*, IV, 4, 23.

4 S. M. Melamed, *Spinoza and Buddha*, p. 243.

5 Moral preparation for spiritual life is thoroughly emphasized in the *Prasnopanishad* and in the *Chhandogya* in course of the dialogue of Prajapati and Indra as well as in the teachings of Satyakama to Upakosala Kamatayana.

6 The *Kathopanishad*, I, 3, 7 also stresses the combination of knowledge and ethics and condemns one who is *avijnānavan, amanaskah* and *asuchi*.

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lided with the active pursuit of a vigorous morally oriented social life. Hence Indian thought cannot be loosely regarded as world-and-life-negating.

The Vedas contain moral injunctions.[7] The supreme insistence of the Vedic seers is on *rita*[8] and *satya*. The Rigveda says that the immensest austerities (*abhiddhat tapaso*) have led to their (*rita* and *satya*) generation. *Rita* is a cosmic immanental force of righteousness.[9] It indicates the belief of the Vedic seers in a teleological conception of the universe because moral perfection is regarded as the aim of the human being.[10] The *Rigveda* says that the good man deviates not from the path of truth.[11] The *Yajurveda* prescribed a graduated course of moral evolutionism :

व्रतेन दीक्षामाप्नोति दीक्षयाप्नोति दक्षिणाम्।
दक्षिणा श्रद्धामाप्नोति श्रद्धया सत्यमाप्यते॥
(Y.S. XIX-30)

Sometimes *satya* is regarded not merely as an individual moral attribute but as a cosmic force (सत्येन उत्तभिता भूमिः). The famous *Prithivi sukta* of the *Atharvaveda* also regards *satya* and *rita* as cosmic forces upholding the earth.

The *Rigveda* recognizes social virtues as well. Conformity to the divine dictates constitutes moral life, according to the Vedic notions. It is true that the gods of the Vedas are not all very moral, but still ethical elements are emphasized. Certainly Indra is prone to drink and Rudra is revengeful but Varuna (who like Buddha is regarded as omniscient) is the great guardian of the moral life[12] and his spies traverse in all quarters to find out the guilty.[13] Varuna is *dhritavrata,* and the upholder of physical and moral order.[14] At one place Agni also is called *Vratapati* — the lord of the great vows.[15] In the *Rigveda*[16] moral virtues like beneficence and righteousness are attributed to *Dyauh* and *Prithivi*. The *Rigveda* also condemns the great vices.[17] These notions had great influence on the Upanishadic and Buddhistic thought also.

The predominant impression which the Vedic religion leaves however, is of the power and buoyancy of the gods. Some moral sentiments and notions are inculcated there but they do not occupy that tremendous importance which they do in Buddhism and Jainism. It must be stated, nonetheless, that the most

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[7] Cf. Kaegi, *The Rigveda*, p. 18 : 'The hymns strongly prove how deeply the prominent minds in the people were persuaded that the eternal ordinances of the rulers of the world were as inviolable in mental and moral matters as in the realm of nature, and that every wrong act, even the unconscious was punished and the sin expiated.'

[8] E. J. Thomas, *The Life of Buddha*, p. 173 thus describes the anthropological root of the notion behind *rita* : 'The possibility of such a conception must have arisen very early in the formation and growth of the association of individuals in societies. A member of a tribe must act in certain ways supposed to be advantageous to his fellow individuals and himself, and certain other actions are forbidden.'

[9] The word Artamanya in the Amarna letters (C 1380-1350 B.C.) is comparable to the Sanskrit *Ritamanya*. The Mitannian evidence (1475-1280 B.C.) may also be cited in this connexion : Artasurmara is comparable to the Sanskrit Ritasmara (mindful of right) and Artatama is parallel to the Vedic *Ritadhaman*.

[10] According to Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 11, *rita* signifies two kinds of order : (i) order in the moral world as truth and right, and (ii) order in the religious world — sacrifice and rite.

[11] ऋतस्य पन्थामन्वेति साधु विजानतीव न दिशो मिनाति।

[12] There are some vital affinities in the moral characteristics attributed to the Vedic god Varuna and Buddha.

[13] Varuna forgives the sins of the implorers. In the Upanishads and early Buddhism the notion of forgiveness of sins is not present. The later theistic cults adopted this idea.

[14] A. B. Keith, *The Religion and Philosophy of* the Veda and Upanishads, pp. 433-34 : '. . . whatever the cause, it is beyond possibility of doubt that in India from the first philosophy is intellectual, not moral, in interest and outlook. The conception of Varuna, which reaches a high level and is majestic enough both in its cosmical and moral aspect, has attained by the time of the *Rigveda* its highest development : it falls rapidly into unimportance, until the Brahmana (*CB*. xiii. 3. 5. 5 ; *TB*. iii. 9. 15. 3) can assert that an ugly deformed man, who is used as a scapegoat at the final bath of the horse sacrifice, is said to be a symbol of Varuna. With this decline of the great and noble god goes hand in hand the decline of the interest of Indian philosophy or religion in morality as such : numerous as are the moral precepts which can be found here and there in Vedic literature, it must be admitted that it is quite impossible to find any real or vital principle of ethics.'

[15] The God Savita has also a lofty moral side.

[16] *Rigveda*, I, 159, 1 ; VI, 70, 6 ; I, 160, 1 ; IV, 56, 2.

[17] *Rigveda*, VII, 104, 8ff. ; IV, 5, 5ff.

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prominent legacy which the Veda leaves is the belief in the prevalence of order and truth in the world.

The *Brahmanas* are mainly concerned with ritualism and sacrifice and hence they stress the social aspects of morality.[18] The Upanishads, on the other hand, stress the emancipation of the individual brought about by the realization of the ultimate reality through gnosis and moral perfection. Buddhism although it adheres to the gospel of *nirvana* which is obtained by the individual, also sanctioned social elements of morality. The *Brahmanas* recognize the three "debts" of a man. The debt to the gods can be redeemed by religious life and sacrificial ritualism.[19] The debt to the ancestors (*pitarah*) can be redeemed by procreating sons who would continue the family-line. Through study and meditation it is possible to get freedom from the debt to the seers. In continuance of the Vedic tradition, the *Brahmanas* also lay insistence on speaking the truth. One important point in the ethical code of the Brahmanas is the inculcation of the confession of evil deeds performed.[20] Surprisingly enough, the Upanishads do not mention confession. But in the Buddhist monastic code confession of sins assumes an exaggerated predominance. In conformity with the Vedic tradition, insistence was still laid on asceticism. The gods were regarded as having attained their supreme position by means of austerities.[21] This is a significant notion and its influence can be seen not only on Buddhism but also on Puranic Hinduism. Buddhism regarded 'devahood' as a rank to be gained by individual moral efforts. In the later books of Hinduism also the status of a *deva* is not regarded as a permanent position but is supposed to last only so long as the merits of the righteous deeds last. Thus it can be said that the Brahmanas inculcated a notion which had tremendous influence on Indian thought and which contains stress on moral endeavours by the individual because they can lead one to the status of a god.

[18] S. N. Dasgupta, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, pp. 25-26 : 'The idea that man enjoys or suffers, either in another world or by being born in this world according to his good or bad deeds, *is the first beginning of the moral idea*, though in the Brahmanic day the good deeds were often of the nature of sacrificial duties than ordinary good works.'

[19] According to the *Satapatha Brahmana*, I, 9, 3, the dead pass between two fires which burn the evil-doers but let the good go by.

[20] *Satapatha Brahmana*, II, 5, 2, 20. Cf. also Christianity.

[21] *Taittiriya Brahmana*, III, 12, 3.

MESSAGE OF THE HOLY MOTHER

CHANDRA KUMARI HANDOO

There comes a time when the mind of humanity gets confused, when chaos overtakes and then result war and destruction. It happens in every age. During the Mahabharata war great destruction took place. In our own times we have already seen two world wars dealing out tremendous carnage. There is again, a fear of a third war. I need not describe the outward conditions prevailing at the present moment. The inward conditions are known, yet not felt. The indiscipline in schools is apparent, for one half of a man's nature, it is said is due to education and environment. There is restlessness everywhere. Authority is questioned. Traditions are doubted. All laws are disobeyed or reluctantly obeyed. Why? The reason for all this is that a new age is dawning. Restlessness and destruction precede that age.

Ordinary people have no insight to look into the future. Some people take to reform but it is petty. Others, who are serious, have a longing for novelty and want to plan for a new order that is to emerge from the present

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chaos. Humanity now is at the cross-roads. Nothing can cope with this situation except a spiritual force, an Incarnation. Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and the Holy Mother constitute that force, they are one as Incarnations.

They were unique in the field of spirituality. They practised spiritual exercises, in the midst of the modern conditions of the world. The truth of the Vedanta, confined as it was in olden days to a group of people living on mountain tops and in forests and caves, were brought by them into the everyday life. They thus proved the saying that if the mountain would not go to Mahommed, Mahommed must go to the mountain. Although Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and the Holy Mother practised spiritual sadhanas in the midst of their daily duties, the Holy Mother surpassed others inasmuch as her practices were done away from all public notice. Her outward life was most plain. So nobody could fathom how deep her spiritual life was.

Ordinary human beings living a mundane life, like us, should learn this lesson from her life. We must rise spiritually not by disowning our surroundings but by the practice of religion in ordinary life. The Holy Mother practised them in difficult situations; the meanest work was never too mean for her. She was cleansing utensils, cooking and doing all other household works, yet her spiritual practices went on uninterrupted. We must try to translate this principle into action.

Youth, honour and other things we value so much — all come and go. Besides all cannot get honour and the like. In spite of unfavourable outward circumstances one can remain calm and sweet-tempered — this lesson the Holy Mother taught us. She had not the advantages of a householder's life, yet all responsibilities of that life fell on her. She looked after her brothers, her nieces, and even the mad widow and an eccentric daughter of a deceased brother. She looked after the latter two in a way which, perhaps, her own brother, had he lived, would not have been able to do. Such was the perfect equanimity with which the Holy Mother conducted the household affairs.

In all Incarnations, modesty and absence of egoism are inborn. The Holy Mother had no idea of 'I' and 'mine'. She did everything in the name of Sri Ramakrishna. She made disciples and prayed for their well-being to Sri Ramakrishna. On one side there were troubles of the household and monetary demands; on the other she was ministering to the spiritual needs of her disciples. She maintained calmness on both sides. Sister Nivedita writes in a letter to the Mother, 'I went to church — to pray for Sara. All the people there were thinking of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and suddenly I thought of you. . . . And it seemed to me that yours was the presence that was to soothe and bless poor S. Sara's sick-room. . . .' Nivedita seems to have then understood that the Mother of God had become the Mother of mankind.

Really she was the mother of all. She was moving in the midst of the household as any ordinary woman. People without understanding her spiritual stature understood only her motherly love. She was so simple that at Jayarambati she would go out and get milk for tea — considered to be a luxury in the village at that time — for some of her disciples who were on a visit there. She would clean even places dirtied by children. In her eyes all were equal. On one occasion she remarked that the Mahommedan dacoit, Amzad, was as much her son as Swami Saradananda her devout attendant and a direct disciple of the Master. Those who addressed her as 'Mother' received more than what they deserved. She never discouraged even fallen women from visiting her. She never denied them the solace which they sought at her feet. Here is a lesson for us.

At the present juncture we have to relate life to the new and changing conditions. Neither conquest of space, nor the different ideologies like communism, can solve the problems of man — nothing but a change of heart will give us peace. The next revolution should not be a bloody one but a revolution

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in man's heart and in his ideas. A complete change-over in the approach to life, a change over for the better is what is required. The five-year plans are not wrong but the longing for more and more wealth and comforts cannot be satisfied by these plans. The remedy lies in our own selves by trying to be contented and self-sacrificing. We must practise and cultivate these virtues. If any outside help comes good; if not we have to reform ourselves.

Men or women, educated or not, young or old, for every one there is a message in the Holy Mother's life. She did more household work than all of us, yet she practised spiritual discipline regularly all her life. We have to follow in her footsteps. Only this way will the world be revolutionised. What we need today is not so much preaching but life of perfection, of character. It has a special appeal in every age. The modern age too cannot resist the appeal of a perfect character. The Holy Mother was an embodiment of perfection. Perfection shines in the minutest details of her life. She has revealed her greatness even in the smallest acts of her daily life. We must understand this principle and embody it in our life.

Towards the end of her earthly existence she left an eternal message: 'Make every one your own. Do not find fault with others.' Instead of being critical with regard to the defects of others, let us turn the critical eye on ourselves. This is the message of the Holy Mother. Let us practise it in even the smallest measure and we are sure to rise above our surroundings as she did above her own.

EDUCATION FOR EMANCIPATION

N. M. UPADHYAY

In a poem 'When Wilt Thou Teach The People' Lawrence has very pithily and strikingly pointed out the pitfalls of so-called political freedom. It may be Napoleon, Lenin or other liberators; people find themselves tied with the new principles and policies of these liberators. What is expected from the people are blind obedience to their creed and unquestioning loyalty to these political emancipators. We realise painfully the inadequacies of political emancipation. Those Indians who, with the dawn of independence, had expected, plenty and prosperity blessing all people, were soon disillusioned. Political emancipation is thus meaningless if not followed by economic emancipation from physical wants and ills of exploitation. But there are also inadequacies of economic prosperity. With all the wealth at our command and no intellectual achievement one looks very grotesque and odd in the society of the intellectual elites. With no light of knowledge one is but steeped in ignorance and is slave to his infirmities and oddities.

Knowledge is power indeed and so economic emancipation should be given meaning and depth by intellectual emancipation. But then intellect has its own limitations. The argumentative spirit and heavy load of knowledge would lead us nowhere. One is lost in fighting with oneself the ignoble battle of arguments and counter arguments. The mentally afflicted person like Hamlet, dwindles and wavers between 'To be, or not to be'. In 'Faust' by Goethe, Faust expresses the same idea:

> 'I have studied now philosophy
> And jurisprudence, Medicine
> And even, alas, Theology
> From end to end with labor keen;
> And here, poor fool, with all my lore.
> I stand no wiser than before.'

The emotional integration is a greater problem than intellectual achievements. Faith is more powerful than knowledge as is also said by Tennyson, 'Knowledge comes but wisdom lingers.' The poverty of spirit is the worst tragedy of human life. So we have to tread

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the path of political, economic and intellectual emancipation to reach our cherished goal of spiritual emancipation. Swami Vivekananda in his discourse 'The Secret of Work' has pointed out the short-lived and temporary nature of satisfaction of physical and economic needs and the inadequacies of intellect and thus stressed the paramount importance of spiritual emancipation and emphatically declared that 'Spirituality is the true basis of all our activities in life.'

The question now arises what definite relation exists between education and emancipation. First of all we ought to know what education is. We very well know that education is a potent means of change. It is the pivot round which peace, progress and prosperity revolve. The contention of John Dewey that 'philosophy is the general theory of education' may be challenged but nobody denies the fact that education is the dynamic aspect of ideas and theories. It is the spearhead of a silent social revolution fraught with the most far-reaching consequences! There may be varied and divergent definitions of education, but there is no dispute regarding what education does. It ultimately results in the modification of behaviour, forming of good habits, gaining desirable attitudes, inculcating sterling virtues, building strong character and well balanced personality. If this is the nature of education, we can very well understand its decisive role in *emancipation*. It will serve as a potent factor of our cherished objective of emancipating man from his weaknesses and infirmities.

The term *emancipation* as applied to education is interpreted in different ways. It means: (1) Emancipation from darkness of ignorance. Education is here considered as light illuminating the dark recesses of the mind. (2) Emancipation from misdirections and misleading paths. Like Nachiketa in Kathopanishad the educated defies all temptations of the flesh and asks politely to 'keep thy horses, dance and song for thyself' (*tavaiva vahastava nrityagite*). Thus it amounts to the choice of the good (*shreya*) path to that of the pleasant (*preya*) one. Education is here considered as direction. (3) Emancipation from impulses of the lower or baser self. The pugnacity, aggressiveness, narcissism, acquisition, and other such instincts enslave us to their domineering play. These clamour for immediate satisfaction and one is swayed by their powerful influence. There are persons who are all passion, all self-aggrandisement and all pugnacity. There is no rest and peace for such people. They are like rudderless craft on the surging waves of humanity and have no direction, no worthwhile aim to guide them in their life. The reason why such people waste their precious life at animal level is best portrayed by Kathopanishad when it says:

पराञ्चि खानि व्यतृणत् स्वयम्भू-
स्तस्मात् पराङ् पश्यति नान्तरात्मन्।
कश्चिद्धीरः प्रत्यगात्मानमैक्ष-
दावृत्तचक्षुरमृतत्वमिच्छन्॥

'The self-existent (God) has rendered the senses defective that they go outward and hence man sees the external and not the internal self. (Perchance) some wise man desirous of immortality turns his eyes in, and beholds the inner Atman.'

Education is here regarded as an elevating process. In one word it can be termed as 'sublimation'. So the function of education is this sublimation which is nothing but intelligent redirection of our responses to outward stimuli.

(4) Emancipation from all human infirmities, such as lust, greed, anger, infatuation, exhibitionism, narcissism, flattery, fame, etc. To be liberated in the true sense of the word we shall have to shed all these outward wrappings. It implies the complete and unconditional submission to Almighty. The essence of the Gita is reflected in the saying 'सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज' (Abandoning all duties, come to Me alone for shelter. 18/66). The quintessence of life lies in this realisation that nothing belongs to us but to some Invisible Power. The moment this realisation comes, he attains complete emancipation. Education here is viewed as imbibing

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faith in absolute values of life and in that Almighty Power about whom it is said

'तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति

(when that shines everything shines after that. By its light all that is, is lighted).

5. Emancipation from good and bad alike. The golden chain binds one as firmly as an iron chain. Swami Vivekananda impresses on us so vividly this idea by saying,

> 'Liberation means entire freedom — freedom from the bondage of good as well as from the bondage of evil. . . . Therefore be "unattached", let things work; let brain work incessantly, but let not a ripple conquer the mind. Work as if you were a stranger in this land, a sojourner, work incessantly, but do not bind yourselves; bondage is terrible. This world is not our habitation it is only one of the many stages through which we are passing.'

Education here is considered as 'free psyche' which implies willingness to accept calmly any situation in life. It may be sunny days of one's triumph or dark gloomy days of one's defeat; it may be showering of warm affection by our relatives or their aversion and indifference to us; man should march on. Life to him is *excelsior*. He is no more the person fighting with his own self but ever going forward in sunshine or showers, in weals or woes and in mirth or miseries.

Now we shall deal with the practical implications of this function of education as emancipation. It implies disinterested pursuit of life and at the same time aiming at active assimilation of ideas which change or modify behaviour and build our character, otherwise a heavy load of passive accumulation of facts is nothing but a donkey's load.

Ample scope should be provided for exercise of the latent powers in the child as Sir Percy Nunn puts it, that he should aim at 'the complete development of individuality so that he can make an original contribution to human life according to his best capacity.' Regarding the methods, we can say that there should be no indoctrination. No preconceived notions, no obsessions and no wild conjectures should guide planning of education. It should be flexible and commensurate with needs, urges and 'mental equipment' of the pupils. There is a deep truth in the saying 'Liberty will not descend to a people, a people must raise themselves to Liberty.' Education is development from within and not an accretion from without. It makes explicit what is implicit in us. It makes potential actual. So education should be a process of utilisation of potentialities of the child so that he can become 'himself'.

The secret of emancipation is not in dissipation of our energies, in fulfilling the clamouring instincts but in controlling them and in redirecting them in proper channels. Sublimation and not repression should be our watchword. Our process of education should be from the outward to the inward, from physical discipline to inner discipline. It is in self-control that emancipation resides and any lack of it will lead us but to chaos and doom.

Our motto of education thus should be incessant struggle for complete emancipation — political, economic, intellectual and spiritual. Just as water does not cling to a lotus leaf, so the attributes of the body do not cling to Atman. Swami Vivekananda too exhorts us that we should give this auto-suggestion, 'I am the spirit! I am the witness; the Ever-Blessed, . . . I am in my picture gallery . . . this universe is my museum'. So the motto of every educational institution should be सा विद्या या विमुक्तये (Education for Emancipation). Emancipation from all bonds and infirmities should be the ardent and sincere effort of every teacher and pupil in the shrines of learning.

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THE BHAGAVATA AND INDIAN CULTURE

TRIVEDI KRISHNAJI

The *Bhagavata Purana* is the most popular and highly esteemed religious classic of India. Though it is as old as Bhagavan Vyasa, it remained in cold storage until the beginning of the Golden Age of Bhakti from about 12th century A.D. The *Bhagavata* is the inspired and mature work of the great Sage Vyasa, who wrote *Mahabharata,* and several Puranas for the benefit of all. Like all the great classics, the *Bhagavata* though old, has perennial novelty. It is surprising that such a great work had remained in obscurity for so long a time. Perhaps the manuscript was inaccessible. Though Sankaracharya did not refer to the *Bhagavata,* we may see its influence in some of his stotras and in his work called *Prabodha Sudhakara.* Sri Ramanuja also had not referred to the *Bhagavata.* Yuan Chwang, the Chinese traveller (629 A.D.) (T. Walters p. 112) and later Alberuni (1030 A.D.) refer to it. Among the scholars Srikanta Sastri and B. N. Krishnan assign to the *Bhagavata* 4th and 6th centuries A.D. Some are of the opinion that it belongs to a later period and some hold that Bopadeva wrote it in the 14th century A.D. With due respect to the scholars, the author of the *Bhagavata* can be none but the author of Mahabharata. Dr. R. D. Ranade, one of the great Savant-Saints, observes in his article on the *Bhagavata* that :

> 'it must have been written earlier, *pari passu* with the development of early philosophical systems, so as ultimately, in course of time to be able to influence later formulation of thought . . . and the whole course of the Mystic Movement.'

The entire scheme of the *Bhagavata* is to present the glorious life and Lila of Bhagavan Sri Krishna and of His devotees. Krishna worship was prevalent before the Christian Era. Dr. Radhakrishnan says that in the 2nd century B.C. two Indian Chiefs fled to Taron in Upper Euphrates and built a town and temple to Krishna which was demolished in 304 A.D. by St. Gregory. (East & West). The *Bhagavata* and Krishna-bhakti move together. Its ancient character is not dimmed by its resurgence in later times.

The *Bhagavata* presents a picture of diverse Vedantic philosophy in harmony with Bhakti in bold colours. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa described the *Bhagavata* 'as fried in the butter of Jnana and soaked in the syrup of Bhakti,' and he recommended its study to his devotees. The *Bhagavata Mahatmya* describes its composite character in the following words : '*Jnana Vairagya samyukta Bhaktih prema rasavaha.*' The *Bhagavata* refers to itself as the quintessence of all Vedanta, 'Sakala Vedânta Sâram' (Bha. 12-13-12.), and it is treated as the Fourth Prasthana. The *Bhagavata* satisfies the spiritual longings of all classes of people and of the Vedantic schools of India. When a reputed Vedantic scholar approached H.H. Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati of Sringeri and requested for an Upadesa, His Holiness advised him to study the *Bhagavata* every year for life, with performance of *Santi* at the end of each reading. The *Bhagavata* is not a book but Bhagavan Himself. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa said : 'It is Bhagavan alone, who in one form appears as bhakta and in another as the *Bhagavata,*'[1] and he often repeated 'Bhagavata-Bhakta-Bhagavan.' To Narada, the greatest devotee of god, we owe the beginnings of both the *Ramayana* and the *Bhagavata.* Valmiki, in grief, uttered words of poetic excellence. Though Vyasa wrote the *Mahabharata,* and other *Puranas* for the spiritual benefit of mankind, he himself felt disconsolate. Narada presented himself before Vyasa and told him to write a special work on the Glory of God and of His devotees to regain solace. Narada initiated him into

1. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna,* 1947. p. 210.

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the *'Chatu sloki bhagavata'*. Parasara, Vyasa's father, wrote, *Vishnu Purana* called *purana ratna* by Yamunacharya. Vyasa wrote the *Bhagavata* which was propagated by Suka Brahmam, who is an embodiment of Jnana and Vairagya. Raja Parikshit renounced his all awaiting his death in 7 days and he requested Suka to show him the shortest way for God Realisation. In the presence of the assembled Sages including Vyasa, Suka narrated ecstatically the entire Bhagavata describing the glories of God in His various Avatars, particularly the glories of Sri Krishna and his Lilas and the lives of several Mystics, Prahlada, Dhruva, Ambarisha, Kuchela, Gajendra, the ardent devotion of Gopis etc. The crowning message of Suka to Parikshit echoes the Mahavakya *'aham brahmāsmi'*.

'aham brahma param dhama brahmāham paramam padam | evam samikshyannatmanam atmanyādhāya nishkale' || Bha. 12-5-11.

The devotional theme of Bhagavata culminates in the Advaita Siddhi by meditating as 'I am the Supreme Brahman and the Supreme Brahman is Myself'. After hearing the *Bhagavata,* Parikshit proclaims his fearlessness of death and of his Brahmic state,

'pravishto brahma niryanam,
abhayam darsitam twaya.'

Siddheswar Bhattacharya, the author of *Philosophy of Bhagavata,* observes, that 'the Supreme truth of the *Bhagavata* is non-dual consciousness'. *Bhagavata* gave rise to the Golden Age of Bhakti between the 12th to 17th century A.D.

The *Bhagavata* though a Purana became a Sastra or Authority influencing the Mystic life and teachings of the saints all over India.

'Srimat bhāgavatam sāstram kalau kirena bhāshitam.'

Madhvacharya (1197-1277) refers to the *Bhagavata* in his Commentary on Gita and also wrote the *Bhagavata Tatparya Chandrika.* Sridhara Swami (1350-1450) wrote a commentary called *Bhavartha Dipika.* Sri Vallabhacharya (1481-1531), the founder of the Suddhadvaita school of philosophy, wrote his *magnum opus,* a commentary on the *Bhagavata* called *Subodhini.* The *Bhagavata* influenced the lives of several saints, who translated or wrote the *Bhagavata* in several languages like Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, Hindi, Oriya, Assamese, Gujarati etc.

The *Bhagavata* was rendered into Tamil by poet Sevvai Chooduvar (15th century). The *Bhagavata* was rendered in Kannada about 1530 A.D. Bommera Potana, a great saint, wrote the *Bhagavata* in Telugu verse (about 1400 A.D.). He lived a life of poverty spurning the patronage of kings and dedicated his work to Sri Rama. Potana's *Bhagavatam* is the most popular literature in Andhra.

About 1500 A.D. one poet Bhalan wrote Dasama skanda of the *Bhagavatam* in Gujarati. Ekanath Maharaj completed the 11th chapter of the *Bhagavata* in Maharashtra language about 1573 A.D. Next to Jnaneswari, Ekanath Bhagavat is the most popular literature of Maharashtra. Surdas (1479-1584), the blind poet and mystic of Agra, wrote the *Bhagavata* in Vraj Bhasha akin to Hindi. Sankara Deva of Assam (1449-1568) wrote portions of the *Bhagavata* in Assamese and it is said that it 'marks an era of renaissance in Assamese poetry'. Jagannatha Das, a reputed saint and disciple of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu wrote the *Bhagavata* in Oriya language. These mystic poets spread the message of the *Bhagavata* to the masses creating a climate for Bhakti and religious life in India.

Narayana Bhatta sang the *Bhagavata* in about 1000 verses in the presence of Lord Krishna at Guruvayur in Malabar. It is famous as *Narayaneeyam,* full of poetic beauty and devotion. Narayana Bhatta was cured of a dire disease after its composition and it is believed to be a reputed remedy for incurable diseases, if it is read with faith and devotion to the Lord of Guruvayur. Narayana Tirtha (about 1600 A.D.) wrote an opera in Sanskrit presenting it as *Krishna Lila Tarangini.* Tahib Imad translated the *Bhagavata* into Persian about 1011 A.H. (1633 A.D.). Scenes from the *Bhagavata* were painted about 1600 A.D.

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It gave a new fillip to the bhakti movement and contributed to the literary and cultural revival of India.

The *Bhagavata* presents an eclectic philosophy and religion, reconciling all divergent views. It says that wise men will refer the noumenon as Brahma, Paramatma, and Bhagavan.

'brahmeti, paramatmeti, bhagavan iti sabdate.' Bha. 1-2-11.

'jnana matram param brahma paramatma isvarah puman drisyadibhi pruthag bhavai bhagavan eka isate." Bha. 3-32-26.

Sri Bhattacharya says that 'the Absolute in its transcendent nature is called as Brahman, in its immanent nature as Paramatman and, in its transcendent and immanent nature as Bhagavan', and he is also of the opinion that the philosophy of the *Bhagavata* is the philosophy of life in perfect tune with the *Upanishads*. Its composite character has unified the divergent philosophic thoughts and religious outlooks. All philosophers and devotees bow before the *Bhagavata*. Though the glories of Vishnu, in His different Avataras, particularly in His avatar as Krishna are praised, God Siva is held in high esteem and treated as one with God Vishnu. Vishnu says :

'Aham brahmā cha sarvascha' Bha. 4-7-50.

Ignorant people see difference between them.

Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna's words 'Bhagavata-Bhakta-Bhagavan' reveal the truth that the *Bhagavata* inspires one to become a bhakta and he in his fullness of devotion to Bhagavan sings and propagates the glories of Bhagavan. The link is perceptible to all who read the lives of Potana, Ekanath, Surdas, Jagannatha Das, Vallabhacharya, Chaitanya Deva etc. *Bhagavata* constitutes the philosophic, religious and cultural unity of India. Krishna is described in His Astottara Namavali as the moon to the ocean of nectarine speech of Suka : *'Suka vak amritabhdi indu'*.

Bhagavata is the quintessence of all Vedanta and one who tastes its rasa or nectar will have no taste for anything else.

'sarva vedanta saram
hi sri bhagavatamishyate
tadrasamrita triptasya
nānyatra syad rati kvachit.'
Bha. 12-13-15.

ALAMBAZAR MATH

And the Inception of the Vow of Service

(Continued from the previous issue)

SWAMI AKHANDANANDA

The Menacing Appearance of Famine — Prayer and Service

I went on reading the *Yogavasishtha* with undivided attention. The Brahmans for their part invited me for dinner to their houses by turns. Before I went for my noonday meal they sent me some water with sugar dissolved in it, some *mung* pulse soaked in water, slices of melon and a dry sweet. Some famished children then stood before me. I would take the sugared water myself and give away the remaining edibles. I asked them to disperse forthwith lest anybody knew how I disposed of the food offered. Nobody knew what I did.

The fathers and brothers of these children had gone elsewhere to earn their living and sent no news home. Starvation compelled them to forget the misery of their wives and children at home.

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One day a Brahman gentleman invited me to dine at his place. Next another gentleman came and informed me that a family had been starving for two days. The master had left home to earn money elsewhere but had failed to remit any money. I went to see them. From outside I asked, 'Is it true, mother, that you had nothing to eat these two days?' In reply I heard only a groaning of the mother of the children in the room.

I came back and with tears in my eyes, prayed to the Master behind closed doors for these people. The gentleman who was to be my host that day was sufficiently well-to-do. This poor family lived next door.

After a long time I opened the door and found that Brahman sitting. He looked miserable. He said to me, 'Come along, please, the day is far advanced.' I said, 'How can I for the life of me, take food while a peasant family, living next door, have been starving for two days?' 'Would you take your meal,' asked he, 'in case they have provision for food for this day?' 'Yes,' said I, 'in that case I shall have no objection to dine.'

All these made me think that if I had had an inkling of this sort of dearth of food in the districts of Murshidabad and Nadia, contiguous to the 24 Parganas, I would surely go back to the Math from Katwa. Now I could not turn back like a coward by disobeying the mandate of Mother Annapurna.

For ten or eleven days I thus lived *incognito*. Then I wrote to Swami Premananda to the Math address stating the reason for my staying here. Immediately before my arrival here an Experimental Post Office had been opened at Mahula. After a reply from Premananda had come, the people of the village came to know who I was.

Next I brought a copy of *Sri Ramakrishna Upadesh* (Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna), compiled by Suresh Chandra Datta, for a Brahman and a photo of the Master for myself. Reading and explaining the Gita in the afternoon went on for a few days. Then there began dancing and *sankirtan* (singing in praise of God), with both arms raised, keeping time with khol and kartal. Many people of Mahula, young and old, joined the party and indulged in the ecstatic joy of the sankirtan. Every Saturday and Tuesday there was chanting of *Chandi*.

I kept the photo of the Master with me and everyday after my bath in the Ganga, offered some flowers before it and with tears rolling down my cheeks prayed to Him for the famine-stricken people. Thus as I prayed to the Master everyday in the morning and at nightfall, one day there was a response, the Master said as it were, 'Wait and see what happens.'

In my boyhood, the pictures in my text-books of peasants with a plough and a leveller on the shoulders, a peasant's hat on the head, generated regard in me for them and I looked at them for long. So tender-aged was I then that I could not make out why they appealed to me. At Mahula, on my way to the Ganga for a dip, I saw the peasants, with 'toka' or 'Mathal' (peasant's hat) on the head, ploughing fields and I ran to them and with their hat on my head and tears in my eyes prayed for their welfare. Men and women of Mahula, on their way to the Ganga for a bath, stood astonished on seeing my conduct.

Only He who is within me knows how my heart ached at the plight of labourers and peasants and how anxious I was for their well-being.

Hope in despondency

A few days after I had written the letter to Premananda, Swami Ramakrishnananda wrote to me from Madras, 'You are but a mendicant Sanyasi, it is not possible for you to provide food for thousands of mouths. So you should go back to the Math.' Premananda too wrote two or three letters to the same effect. At this time Swamiji at Darjeeling enquired after me and wrote to Swami Brahmananda advising him to make me go back to the Math for an urgent business. He too asked me to be back at the Math.

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Sri Charu Chandra Basu, translator of the Buddhist scripture, *Dhammapada,* was then the secretary of the Mahabodhi Society. He often came to Alambazar Math. From Swami Premananda he came to know of my (*Dhanurbhanga Pan*) firm resolve and offered to contribute a sum out of the Famine Relief Fund collected by the Mahabodhi Society. Premananda intimated this to me in his letter. This good news came to me as a windfall.

At this time Swamiji was back at the Math from Darjeeling. He enquired about me and Swami Premananda handed over to him my three letters from Mahula, containing details about the havoc caused by famine. The misery of the poor people, described in the three letters, so overwhelmed Swamiji with sorrow that he immediately wrote to me a letter full of encouragement and optimism. Not only that, he forthwith sent me two assistants and some money out of his own savings to be the first contribution to my Famine Relief Fund.

The readers of Swamiji's letters know how he put new energy in me in my famine relief work by writing letters in an encouraging optimistic tone. I read his letters over and over again and gained fresh strength within me. The Mantra : *'Mantram vā sādhayeyam shariram vā pātayeyam'* (I shall either carry out my purpose or lay down my body) filled my heart. Oh, in what a strong current of activity did I submerge myself then. I thought that this sadhana (effort) of ours would in no time bring about an unprecedented new era.

Suren

Of the two workers Swamiji sent to assist me, one was Surendranath Basu (afterwards Sureswarananda). It will not be out of place to write here something about him.

Suren was a clerk at the Hoare Miller Co. At the time I write of here, a famous Hathayogi (a yogi undergoing an esoteric method of physical exercises to strengthen the body), named Narayan Swami, lived in a garden at Kankurgachi in the suburbs of Calcutta. I saw him once. A Bengalee named Mati learnt Hathayoga from him and taught it to many in Calcutta. One of his pupils was the late Lalit Babu (retired Deputy Collector), father of the late Mohinimohan Chattopadhyay, attorney-at-law. I once saw Mati, the Hathayogi, with our Girish Babu. Suren was a disciple of his. He could skilfully exhibit the processes of Neti Dhauti.

A few words more about Narayan Yogi. A rich man's son of Calcutta brought down Narayan Yogi and raised a commotion at the crossing of Beadon street. They gave it the name of 'Nava Hullor'. On the Janmashtami (the birth anniversary of Sri Krishna) they exhibited the horoscope of Sri Krishna depicted beautifully and cleverly in a picture.

I wrote to Swamiji all these particulars about Suren and requested him to initiate the latter into Sanyasa. When I left Alambazar Math Swamiji asked him to come to me at Mahula. Nityananda came with him.

Starting of Famine Relief Work

On the *Baisakh Sankranti* day (the last day of that month, Baisakh of 1304 of the Bengali era) they came to Mahula and simultaneously there reached me a sum of rupees one hundred and fifty from Swamiji's own fund with a mandate of his to start famine relief work at once.

From a fair we purchased rice at a high rate. On the first day — 15th May 1897 — only eighteen famine-stricken people were given doles. To start with, the measure I gave was 12 oz. for an adult, 8 oz. for a boy or a girl and 4 oz. for an infant.

Within five or six days I made a survey of the villages and gave tickets for rice to many a famished man and woman. In the meantime the Secretary of the District Charitable Famine Committee (Sri Nrityagopal Mukhopadhyay) one day came to see our work and was highly pleased. Within a short time after his departure, Mr. E. V. Levinge, Magistrate

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and Collector of this (Murshidabad) district, came one morning and talked with me. He saw our distribution of rice. Seeing the famine-stricken men assembled, he advised us to give doles only to men like them and not to able-bodied people lest they be demoralised.

'We are grateful to you,' said the gentleman. 'Kindly let me know how best I can help you.' There was no approach to the village from the main road. I requested him to sanction a good road for Mahula.

For two months the contributions from the Mahabodhi Society Famine Fund sufficed us. But for this timely aid of the Mahabodhi Society, which was the first contribution from outside, our work would have suffered. Charu Babu was then much devoted to the Math. Had he not been the Secretary of the Mahabodhi Society we could not have had this help.

After Mr. Levinge, the Magistrate, had come, I went to Berhampore and saw Nrityagopal Babu. On his advice I saw the District Judge, Chairman of the Relief Committee, and an influential member of the Committee, Sri Baikuntha Nath Sen. The members took a unanimous resolution and sold rice to us first at three rupees a maund for a few days and afterwards at two rupees a maund. We purchased our rice nowhere else, for we had an advantage here.

(To be continued)

INDIA'S CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATION—III

V. N. SHARMA

General Methods

Until a teacher gets a proper pupil he does not teach. The teacher is not a believer in making higher education open to all, irrespective of their types and temperaments. He imparts to each pupil only that type of education for which he is fitted by character and capacity. On account of this alone certain pupils are not admitted to higher studies as ancients consider that these types of students are hampered either by their material environments or by the lack of the right atmosphere at home and in social life. They include Sudra types under this category but there are remarkable instances when the students born in the Sudra caste transcend these restrictions on account of their ardent desire for knowledge and exceptional abilities. 'The earnest student can obtain and accept knowledge from all classes' (Manu II. 240, 241). In other words it is not the caste but the Brahmanical quality that is demanded from all students.

The teacher, according to the same source, should see that the temperament and aptitude of his student is in harmony with his teaching. It must be presented in such a way that he can grasp it and assimilate it in his mental organism step by step. Indian medical authorities also enjoin this on all teachers 'A boy should be educated only when it is clearly known that he is strong enough to undergo the strains of instruction' (*Susruta*). Lord Buddha was a master in this method. He adapted his teachings to the needs and the capacities of his disciples and hearers. To some he brought home His teachings through parables, to some through lessons, and to some others by abstract methods.

The same ancient tradition is also followed to a great extent by the Muslim teachers as well. It is the Muslim tradition — can we say an injunction from the Holy Qoran — that teachings and explanations on any subject should be adapted to the capacity, needs and desires of the pupils, so as not to compound or create disgust in him. 'Do not give thy wealth to the mean' is the motto proclaimed by Mohammad to the Muslim teachers. They adopt certain methods to bring about a right attitude towards studies. A Muslim text tells

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us that Muslim teachers (*Peers*) begin their teaching by initiating the pupil according to the tradition of their particular school. Then the teacher asks him to recite some particular name of God, corresponding to the Sanskrit word *Japa*. Then he directs his attention towards the pupil, what is technically known as *Tawajjah* (Attention). He does this mentally. Further the teacher impresses his own image in the heart of the pupil so that it is constantly before the mind's eye of the pupil and cannot be effaced, do whatever he might. Next he asks the pupil to brood over the attributes of God. During this process the pupil gets 'drowned', it means that the pupil gets drowned in the ocean of knowledge with full consciousness. After this the teacher teaches indifference to all outer things. He makes the student trust Him and offer everything at His feet without desiring in this process anything even from God Himself. Everything he sees around is none but the expression of Him and as such he treats all and respects all as His sparks and expressions. Thus alone the pupil is told that he would attain an abiding happiness and peace. Complete absorption in Him the student attains in this way. There are sounds of His voice everywhere and the student is enjoined to listen to them and thus he attains perfection and understanding (The Path of Sufis). Thus the portals of a pupil's mind are opened and knowledge of all subjects is made available to make his place in this world steady and firm.

The student is told that it is a privilege to seek knowledge at the hands of a teacher and he must take advantage of all natural facilities he has around him to achieve this. He is told that his bodies, physical, emotional and mental are not given to him to be squandered away and made unclean in the pursuit of things that hinder his path; it is given to him so that he might consume them with the fire of tapas, securing by that what is good for others here and bliss immortal for himself hereafter (Manu I. 98. 99; IV. 10. 11).

Describing the state of mind of students a Buddhist text tells us that the same ancient methods were followed in the time of Buddhist teachers also. 'By growth, by questioning and by his master's aid, by thoroughness and by conversation with them, by intercourse with men worthy of respect and adoration, by residence within a pleasant spot — by these alone one's insight is purified. They who have these, grow in wisdom' (Milinda Panha V. 1. 8). Further the traditional Aryan doctrine of Adhikara Vada is emphasised by the teachers on all who seek knowledge. 'Impart knowledge to those who have a genuine desire for the understanding of Brahman, and not for those who would study merely for intellectual culture.' Sri Sankaracharya puts this doctrine in a nutshell. There are nine qualifications which a teacher should demand from his pupil and through this alone a real knowledge would arise and till then no instruction of any kind should be imparted. They are discrimination, an understanding to choose the real from the unreal (*nityanityaviveka*), desirelessness (*vairagya*), quietude (*śama*) and subjugation (*dama*) of senses within and without; cessation of non-essentials in one's path (*uparati*), endurance (*titikshâ*), intentness (*samâdhâna*), earnestness and faith (*śraddhâ*) and lastly an intense desire for liberation from passing things — births and deaths — and a desire for a union with the Supreme in all stages of work (*Mumuksutva*) (Sankaracharya's *Vivekachudamani*). Earnestness and faith (*śraddhâ*) is the preliminary test for all instruction and teachers are enjoined not to instruct those pupils who have no earnestness and fervent desire (*Satta*). The word *śraddhâ* is very difficult to translate as it means more than earnestness and faith. It is the attitude of the open-mindedness, a state of disposition to receive what strikes one as reasonable (Bhandarkar Oriental Conference Report for 1919, Poona). Ancients emphasise this as a condition for true study (*Chand. Up.* IV. 4). There must be besides these according to Nannul spontaneity and originality in the student.

'The swan discriminates, the cow ruminates at leisure, the earth yields in proportion to labour bestowed, the parrot merely repeats, the pot with

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holes loses all, the goat eats the tips only, the buffalo makes the water in the pond muddy and drinks it and the strainer lets all the water out and retains only the dregs. The seeker of truth and understanding rejects all, holding the first.' (*Nannul*: English transl. by Dr Pope 1888. p. 45).

This is the ancient path of understanding and wisdom. The Bhagavad Gita touching on this point time and again tells us :

'thus alone Janaka and others indeed attained to perfection by this path having an eye to the welfare of the world, thou also should follow this. Whatsoever a great man doeth, that other men also do. The standard he setteth up by that the people go. As the ignorant act from attachment to action, so should the wise act without attachment, desiring the welfare of the world.' (*Gita*, III. 20 & 25).

Ancients moreover emphasise on this aspect rather than mere formal objective learning. 'The Veda forgotten, is soon learnt again. But the student who has fallen from his path of Dharma is fallen for ever' (Kural 134).

Individual Method

Ancient teachers took a special care not to hamper the individuality of the student. The student is considered as a potential force, a spark of the Divinity and the teacher watched his individual uniqueness and directed it to follow its own path to reach the Godhead with full consciousness. Hence the ancient method may be called the individual system of instruction. We find personal attention in all methods. An intelligent student is left alone to discover his own path but the teacher takes special care of those who are slow in understanding. The ancient saying of 'Instruct the inert and sharpen the dull' is seen in actual practice in all methods of teaching. We find this followed by the Buddhist and other teachers also.

Taking into consideration these unique types and temperaments instruction was given in accordance with the individual pupil's tendency and the caste system was taken as the basis in all periods of Indian History.

To understand the student, his potentialities, his individual uniqueness, a teacher usually does not impart education for some time, but observes his pupil. During this probationary period he tests the pupil by giving opportunities in different services and activities both in his house and in company with his classmates and companions outside, and 'thus he must test or examine his pupil. He has to watch and correct all the irregularities in the personal life of the student, as well as faults if any in his daily habits and then alone he should instruct him in the realm of studies.' (*Usana Samhita* III. 33-34).

To bring home his teachings and his instructions, the teacher took greatest care to discover the aptitudes and fitness (Adhikara) of each and every individual student. He rejected such students who have neither the tradition nor the aptitude for acquiring knowledge. In his idea it is indeed a bad policy to spend time and energy in making one who could have become an excellent soldier or an expert craftsman into a priest. It is the ancient ideal 'better die with learning rather than plant it in a barren soil' (*Chandhogya Brahmana*). 'The highest mystery should not be given to one whose passions have not been subdued, not even to the son or a disciple if he is unworthy' (*Sveta. Up.* VI. 22). 'Let no man preach this most secret doctrine to any one who is not his son or his disciple or who is not of a serene mind. To him alone who is devoted to his teacher and endowed with all necessary qualities may it be communicated' (*Maitrayana Up.* VI. 29). In this connection the story of the Goddess of Learning who came to a teacher is often quoted. She said 'Preserve me, I am thy highest treasure. Do not impart me to a malicious person; thereby my potency will be minimised' (*Manu* II. 14). 'Instruct me only to him whom thou shalt know to be pure, perfectly content and free from the follies of the world' (*Manu* II. 115). Further in another text it is said that 'Even in the absence of a means of livelihood, rather let a Vedic preceptor die with his knowledge than impart it to an unworthy recipient' (*Manu* II. 113). So we find, a teacher refuses to impart any

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instruction to a pupil until he proves to the teacher's satisfaction his competence, mental and moral, to receive the instruction, especially when that is connected with the subtlest aspects and truths of life (*Katha Up.* Ch. 1). Hence his teaching method is *adesha*, recommendations, suggestions rather than commands. Every one has the capacity to develop and express his own understanding and it is the duty of the teacher to unveil this mystery to the student and thus lead him from non-understanding to understanding. In this connection the teacher shows two ways to the pupil to attain his desire — the path of *Para* and *Apara*. That which conquers all illusion, ignorance and non-knowledge is known as Para. By this path, the teacher takes away obstacles that disturb the pupil in his search. Thus alone he draws out the knowledge which is within the student himself and sets him on his wanderings in all regions of knowledge (*Mundaka Upanishad*).

If we go further into his methods we see that the teacher first makes his pupils see the Self (Atman) in their eyes, this is the first step he takes up in his method of instruction. In other words he teaches how to concentrate on a particular thing with one pointedness (First step in Yoga is concentration of the eyes on the tip of the nose to meditate on the Self). It is said that the teacher could remove the bandage of ignorance from his pupil's eye in this way. Through this method he further tries to make him learn that he is other than his body, the senses, and other organic forces that surround his body and mind. It does not mean, he has to throw them away, no, on the other hand there they are and he is there living in them as a resident or indweller. He must fulfil his part in this life and all these he uses as his instruments in his path. Moreover, as the bullock yoked to a cart is led by the driver, he leads him to learn that he is a spark, a part of Paramatma. He is His property and exists to express and represent Him in this world. The moment the pupil understands this mystery the teacher goes further to make him overcome the nature of things that attempt to take an upper hand and hinder him in his path. All the passions, caste-pride, fame, sleep, anger, bragging, personal beauty and fragrance, the student has to overcome (*Gopatha Brahmana* II. 1. 2. 1-9).

> 'All these forces of nature he has to direct into a creative channel instead of destroying them. Then the caste-pride turns into *Brahmavarchasam* (dynamic illumination that points the way to the Most High). If he works for his teacher and for his fellow-pupils, he obtains fame. Even though he is sleepy, he obtains the awareness that is in the python. If humble in spirit he does not injure anyone's anger, he obtains the anger that is in the boar; if he does not perform braggart tricks in water, he obtains the *braggadocio* that is in the water; if he does not smell plants and trees after having cut them, he becomes himself fragrant' (*Atharva Veda*—Bloomfield. P. III).

Then the teacher will begin to create a longing in him to reach the Highest Self by describing His abode and His form. Then alone the pupil is qualified for the next step in education, known as Brahma Vidya, instruction on the Self (Atman) itself.

Students are also enjoined to seek such preceptors who could teach the mystery of the Self, leading them, from their world to the region of the Self. 'He should approach only such a teacher as knows the end of all knowledge (Vedanta) and who sees Brahman in meditation' (*Mundaka* 1. 2-12). Krishna also follows this ancient path by enjoining his disciple Arjuna to 'obtain this Knowledge by prostration, by service, and by questioning those that possess Knowledge, the Wise and those that have had realisation of the Tattva (the Self) will then teach you that Wisdom' (*Gita* IV. 34).

A question is often asked why the teacher insists on removing the bandage (ignorance identified always as bandage (bandha)) from the eyes of his pupil. The answer of ancients is 'If a person's eyes be bandaged, and he be brought from the Gandhara country and left in a lonely place, he will turn to the east, or to the south, or will look down, and cry "I have been left here with my eyes bandaged." If some good man removes the bandage and

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says "The Gandhara country is in this direction; go in this direction" then the person will go from village to village, making enquiries if he be clever, and does not forget what he is told, and reaches the Gandhara country. This applies to him also who goes to a teacher' (*Chand. Up.* VI : 14 : 1, 2). He receives instruction on the purpose of this life through meditation and instruction imparted in accordance to his state of understanding in his search. It is said that such instruction and guidance from a teacher, are necessary, serviceable and helpful in his path.

He who touches the foundation of this Knowledge cannot keep quiet. There is so much he could think, as his whole constitution is now excited and stimulated by this thought, by this dynamic energy and consciousness. He begins to peep into this Highest region and then plans to reach it with full understanding and with all instruments necessary to clear the path of obstruction that he might happen to meet in the outer world. The *Ramayana* gives us some idea of the way the teachers in the Post-Vedic times taught their students.

> 'The Knowledge (Sruti) observing that her audience did not grasp what she first explained, owing to the undeveloped state of their intellect felt dejected and helpless. She then took to the method of explaining to them in a slightly different style without directly touching upon the Self. She spoke about the useful matters to be accomplished, pointing out their means and effects. Good and evil were explained as also the nature of elements and their products. She explained what is Logic and what are the *sastras* (Sciences). Definitions of technical terms and their meanings were then furnished' (*Sundarakanda* II-43).

Thus they explore the dynamic personality. Everything is there, within the person and so it is the injunction of the Upanishads to all 'what is within it should be sought' (*Chand. Up.* VIII-I-1). This alone is 'to be seen i.e. intuited, to be heard, to be thought of and to be continually concentrated upon' (*Brihad. Up.* II-4-5).

The whole structure of teaching is based on this and without a thorough knowledge of this first cause, no other subjects are of use. No dogma has a place, neither blind belief has a room and every method adopted in this connection should aim at the unveiling of the personality of the individual (*Praśna Up.* I. *Gita* III. 29). So to come to this knowledge, as we have seen elsewhere, the student has to pass through many preliminaries that make him peep into this Self either with consciousness or without it. The student during the earlier part of studies with his teacher is taught to work with different projects that relate to the worship and other sacred ceremonies. Through this, it is said, there awakens in him a curiosity, a spirit of observation and enquiry, which are indispensable to those who like to have a peep into those invisible regions and which he will have to enter when the right time comes. Much stress is placed by the teachers on the subjective sciences and the introspective consciousness rather than other spheres of activities. These are to be taught and invoked in all students rather than the kindergarten system. The science of the Self is the foundation and guide of other subjects. An illustration is often given in this connection to remind us of the worthlessness and unimportance of objective subjects before one understands the foundation of all. When Svetaketu reached his school age, his father calling him said 'To keep up our family traditions go to a teacher for your studies and lead the life of studentship.' The boy goes to a teacher and spends 12 years of studentship and studies the Vedas and their allied subjects. He becomes an expert in all sciences and arts and comes home proud of his studies. The father sees in him a great egoism and wants him to get rid of that. He asks him 'My boy, I see you are very proud of your studies. Do tell me have you learnt that One thing by knowing which what cannot be known becomes known, by which one hears what cannot be heard, by which one perceives what cannot be perceived. Have you asked your teacher for that?' To the son this enquiry was rather a puzzle and unbelievingly he asks the father to narrate it. The father answers,

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'Just as by knowing a clod of clay all that is made of clay is known, the difference being in only name and form, similarly by knowing that One which is the cause of this world you can know everything that is in the world around you.' The boy says 'If my teacher had known this he would have told me.' Fearing that his father would send him back to the same teacher for this knowledge, he asks his father himself to reveal that science of all sciences. Father answers 'My son, there is one knowledge by which one knows all things in the world. All sciences speak of this. Bring a fruit and I will show you this.' He brings a fruit. Father asks him to break that. He does that. 'Do tell me what you see in this.' 'I see a seed in this.' 'Do break that as well.' He does that. 'Do tell me what you see in this.' 'I see nothing.' 'There are many things even in these and you cannot see them. There are subtle things that are invisible to you. From these subtle alone leaves, branches and stem of a tree arise. It is something which cannot be expressed and all vital power of the world has come from This alone. Know This and you will know all other things. It is the source of all forms and names. You are That; this body is not you. Even you are the Jnata (Knower) that enjoys all.' This teaching was a new revelation, as he had never met this in course of his studentship with the teacher. He was eager to know more about this and interrupted his father, asked many questions and thus he started to know the foundation-knowledge of all subjects and of all sciences.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

The article 'Religious Practice in the Household' is a translation and adaptation of a talk given by Srimat Swami Vishuddhanandaji Maharaj, Vice-President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, at the Ramakrishna Mission, Lucknow on 3-11-59. It appeared in the *Udbodhan,* the Bengali journal of the Ramakrishna Order, in the month of March 1961. The talk was taken down and written for the *Udbodhan* by Sri Jayadev Bandyopadhyay.

Sri Hemanta Kumar Sen from Jabalpur is a writer of a book on Acharya Sankara.

Dr. Vishwanath Prasad Varma, M.A. (Patna), M.A. (Columbia), Ph.D. (Chicago), is Professor of Politics, Patna University and a former Research Scholar in Buddhist Philosophy.

The article on 'Message of the Holy Mother' is a summary of the speech delivered by Srimati Chandra Kumari Handoo, M.A., of Bombay, while presiding over the public celebration of the 109th Birthday of the Holy Mother, at Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras.

Sri N. M. Upadhyay is from Mandi, Himachal Pradesh.

Sri Trivedi Krishnaji is an advocate of Madras.

'India's Contribution to Education' by Dr. V. N. Sharma is the third in the series.

A LESSON FROM GOA

With the liberation of Goa, the last vestiges of colonialism have been wiped out from the face of India. It gives every Indian great joy and for that matter should give every freedom loving person a great satisfaction. The whole country hailed the liberation of Goa as a great event. Many Afro-Asian nations who had been under foreign domination and are now become free, who know by bitter experience what it is to be under a government not of the

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soil, welcomed the action and the liberation with great enthusiasm.

It is but meet to evaluate at this juncture the causes that led to the swift and almost bloodless liberation of Goa. Its liberation came because the people wanted it. It came because there was the vast sympathy of the Indian masses, for their brothers separated from them by artificial barriers by a foreign power. It came because the Indian Nation had the tremendous power, not only moral but physical too, to help Goa, an integral part of India, in its struggle. Last but not least it came because India was united.

We have to learn a lesson from this event while rejoicing in the liberation. It is the unity of the country, more than anything else, that helped us immensely to go to the aid of our suffering brethren. We must treasure up this experience in our hearts and remember it as often as we can, in order to ward off all thoughts of division and separatism. All throughout the history of India the internecine quarrels, between prince and prince, state and state and principality and principality, were as it were invitations of welcome to foreign hordes to come and rule over us. Time and again this happened and time and again we failed to unite even in the face of danger, destruction and slavery with the consequent and obvious result of providing foreigners ample opportunities to strike at us separately and individually or play one of us against the other for their own profit. India, as the world knows, never went to conquer and enslave any country and therefore it does not need to do so even now, but it has to be strong if it has to keep its freedom. The integrity of the nation, therefore, is a prime necessity if we have to withstand the onslaught and inroads of the greedy nations which even at this juncture are stretching out their claws to grab at the throat of our motherland.

Goa action has proved that our armed forces are of the superb calibre and are second to none in the world. They can strike and strike quick and hard when the opportunity demands it. It now depends on us, the civilians, to remain united so that we can effectively throw back all aggressors and stop all infiltrations and incursions into our country. It is good that efforts are being made at various levels to find ways and means to bring about an emotional integration of the nation. Let us hope and pray that such efforts be fruitful. The story of the old man, who, on his death bed, taught by the example of a bundle of sticks the great teaching, 'united we stand, divided we fall' can be always remembered to eschew from our midst all ideas of narrow parochialism and separatism. Finally let us pray to the Lord to grant us understanding to comprehend this great teaching and act up to it.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

A SADHU'S REMINISCENCES OF RAMANA MAHARSHI: By Sadhu Arunachala (A. W. Chadwick). [Pp. 128. Price Rs. 1.50. Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, South India].

This is a marvellous epitome — a triumph of condensation — of the life and philosophy of Bhagavan Sri Ramana by one of his most ardent devotees, whose kinship with the Maharshi was very like Maruthi's to Sri Rama. It is in part biography and in part theology. Even so, no incident of any importance has been left out, and no facet of his metaphysical doctrines has been left unnoticed. This has been a little easy to chronicle for the author because of his daily and intimate contact with the Great Seer for upwards of twenty-five years. His "personal reminiscences' have more than ordinary significance because he has himself been able to experiment and experience many of the theories with which the Maharshi had always been associated. The Bhagavan was himself a living exponent of the doctrine of Advaita, and pages 51 to 54 give a most rational background which enables one to realise it in its proper perspective.

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One hopes that this exceedingly worthwhile publication will be translated into all the languages of this country.

S. RAJAGOPALAN

SISTER NIVEDITA: By Pravrajika Atmaprana. Pub. Sister Nivedita Girls' School, 3, Nivedita Lane, Calcutta-3. Pp. 297. Price Rs. 7.50.

'If an Indian woman in Indian dress were to preach the religion which fell from the lips of the Rishis of India — I see a prophetic vision — there will rise a great wave which will inundate the whole western world. Will there be no woman in the land of Maitreyi, Khanna, Lilavati, Savitri and Ubhayabharati, who will venture to do this?' Thus wrote Swami Vivekananda in 1897. But, says the author of this remarkable book, 'this fervent appeal of the Swami did not touch the heart of any woman in India. But in a far-off land the light of its inspiration broke upon the soul of Margaret Noble.' (P. 24). Who was this Miss Noble? How did she meet Swami Vivekananda and how became his disciple? What was the work she did as *Nivedita* the 'Dedicated'? All these and many more questions of historical importance to renaissant India are answered in this readable biography written in chaste style and proper proportion with carefully sifted material.

This is not merely an account of the life of Nivedita. The narrative throws a flood of light on the social and political conditions at the time of her intense activity in India with interesting sidelights on the prominent personalities like Tagore, Sir J. C. Bose and Abala Bose (with whom Nivedita developed a deep friendship), Abanindranath, B. C. Pal, R. C. Dutt, Sri Aurobindo, to name only a few. The opposition she had to face in India from orthodox quarters *e.g.* the uproar caused among them by her lecture on Kali Worship (P. 75) and among the English section of her countrymen, her exit from the Ramakrishna Order in order to be free to serve the land of her choice in the political field, her relentless efforts to awaken among Indians a sense of pride and appreciation of their own cultural and religious heritage and to win recognition for it in the West, her role in the emancipation of Indian Art from western influence, and above all, her relations with the Swami as his spiritual child and later with the Holy Mother are all described in abundant detail. We would have liked some more details about the spiritual side of her life to be included in this book for after all the source of her amazing dynamism of action lay in the spiritual depths of her being.

Most of the present generation do not know many of the interesting facts recorded by the author *e.g.* Nivedita's securing of financial help to Sir J. C. Bose to further his work in the discoveries of Plant-Life and her decisive support when the Indian scientist had to face an open 'Bose War' from the British Scientists as a body. It is also described how it was Nivedita who was responsible in a large measure for the great artist Abanindranath Tagore adopting a purely Indian style of Art (after his earlier work under western influence). He came to consider her 'to be an ideal of beauty and said that he visualised her as the meditating Uma.' (258).

A number of illustrations add to the value of this quality book which should be read by every Indian.

M. P. PANDIT

WHEN THE WORLD WAS YOUNG: By Verrier Elwin. Pub. The Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. Pp. 82. Price Rs. 1.50.

As man grows old and civilization takes its course and the blessed science wings up into space, everything becomes serious, aweful. Young world is immediately stripped of its romance, poetry and love. We slowly forget ourselves and our infancy and innocence. And the amusing green story of those petty old days 'When the world was young' is burnt in the wilderness of the wise grey bushy hairs of human destiny. But still some of these stories are preserved amongst our young tribal brothers, which give faint re-collection of man's boyhood and its colourful human faculty reflecting on the theory of earth and its creation, its zoology and botany, its religion and poetry. These are the stories when the spider of reason and doubt, science and philosophy, had not yet appeared in the garden of man, when faith and simplicity had not yet fallen a prey to the hunting man himself. These are the stories that still glitter the romance in ourselves (the grand parents of our human civilization) and our children. As it comes across from a far too distant tribal hamlet across the rivers and dales, it carries a smell of lotuses and poppy fields. It gives such an air that our mind goes back again, for a moment into that border of shady groves and sunny rocks, where still the tribal children cry under the care of their granny's vigilant affection and weave out these stories without being challenged by science and technology.

BR. SUDHANGSHU

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SCIENCE AND SPIRIT: By S. V. Ramamurty. Pub. By Author, Care Indian Bank, Madras-1. Pp. 140. Price Rs. 7.50.

The author of this interesting volume is a distinguished scholar who has made a mark as a civilian, thinker and administrator. His special penchant has been mathematics and he seeks to bridge the ancient gulf between Matter and Spirit by means of Mathematics. It is the considered view of Sri Ramamurty that far from being irreconcilable opponents, Matter represented by the Sciences which explain its structure and potentialities, and the Spirit represented by Religion and Philosophy which interpret it in terms of thought and life, are in fact mutually strengthening elements once they cross their self-set rigid boundaries.

The short essays and addresses collected in this book indicate the lines on which the co-operation could be achieved for the lasting good of humanity, especially the lacunae in the economic and social structures of the peoples that could be filled up by the healing touch of the Spirit. There are also a few life-sketches of some of the eminent men and women like Annie Besant, Sri Aurobindo, whose careers were a standing demonstration of the wonderful results of living syntheses between the Power of life and the Light of the Spirit.

The book is interesting and sets one thinking.

M. P. PANDIT

A SHORT HISTORY OF BUDDHISM: By Edward Conze. Pp. 117. Rs. 4.50.

CROSSING THE STREAM: By Bhikshu Sangharakshita. Pp. 75. Rs. 3.50. Pub. Chetana Ltd. 34, Rampart Row, Bombay-1.

Ever since the secular Government of India initiated and conducted the Buddha Jayanti celebrations some six years ago, there has been a spate of literature on Buddhism and the light it holds for the amelioration of the fevered condition of present day humanity. In keeping with the spirit of the occasion superlative virtues have been ascribed and tall claims made in some of the books, for Buddhism as the one panacea for all ills. Be that as it may, this revival movement has served to focus one's attention on one of the most significant phases in the development of human thought. What was the original Teaching of the Master? What transmutations did it undergo from time to time? What was its contribution to the life of the countries where it spread in the long course of its history? And why did it ultimately fail to hold ground in the land of its birth? These are questions that strike every intelligent mind and we are happy to see these and allied topics adequately discussed in the short book by Dr Conze under review.

Dr Conze divides the entire course of Buddhism into four eras: B.C. 500 to 0, what may be called the Hinayana period; 0-500 A.D. the age of Mahayana; 500-1000 A.D. the period of the Tantras and Zen; 1000 to the present day — a long stretch of survival and adjustment. The author is a leading authority on the subject and his treatment is brief but adequate. Discussing the future of Buddhism in countries like China and Tibet which have come under the Communist rule, Dr Conze anticipates 'a cross fertilisation of ideas....with far-reaching consequences' between Mahayana Buddhism and dialectical materialism in whose doctrines there is a close similarity.

The second book by Bhikshu Sangharakshita (a former English soldier who took to the life of a Buddhist monk after the second World War) is an entertaining collection of his writings interpreting the Teaching of the Enlightened One in its relation to situations and problems in everyday life. To quote just one typical piece:

> When the composer Mozart was asked what was the most important part of his music, he did not reply that melody, or harmony, or counterpoint, or even orchestration was the most important, but simply: 'The pauses'.. And just as pauses are the most important part of music and empty spaces....of paintings, so are silence and emptiness the most important part of life .... There is a silence of words, a silence of desires and a silence of thoughts. Only when the egoistic will itself is silent....will be heard the True Sound.

Both the books are well worth a study and form a fine introduction to Buddhist history and thought

M. P. PANDIT

HIMALAYAN PILGRIMAGE: By B. N. Datar. Pub. Publications Division, Govt. of India, New Delhi. Pp. 103.

Speaking of his Vibhutis in the Cosmic Manifestation, Sri Krishna declares that of the mountain-ranges He is the Himalayas. This superhuman character of the Himalayas has been a cherished legacy of the Indian tradition down the millenniums and has come to be a part and parcel of her race consciousness. Sri Datar who has been a Minister in the Union Cabinet in charge of Home Affairs, has had to travel a good deal in these mountain-tracts and study the region and its peoples from many angles. The present book may be described as a kind of report

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to the nation on the nature and extent of the influence exercised by the mighty Mountain on Indian history, geography, literature and the religious and spiritual life of her people up to the present day, the economic and social conditions of the inhabitants of these ranges from Kashmir to Nepal and the lines on which their future development is to be oriented.

There are special chapters on the holy rivers and the sacred shrines like Badri and Kedarnath in the Himalayas with plenty of geographical data and illustrations. As observed by the late Sri Govind Ballabh Pant in his Introduction to the publication, this book has something of interest to tell to every one, be he a pilgrim, a mountaineer, a tourist or a poet.

M. P. PANDIT

PROBLEMS OF EDUCATION IN INDIA: By Dr K. L. Srimali. Publications Division, Govt. of India. Pp. 194, Price Rs. 2.50

This is a collection of some of the speeches and broadcasts made by Sri Srimali, the Minister for Education in the Union Government, during the years 1955-1960. They cover a wide variety of topics beginning with the role of the Government in the movement of National Education and at present what one may call the viewpoint of the administrator on problems in the field of Education. An educationist himself, Dr Srimali lays his finger on the right spot in many of his diagnoses. His appeal for the revival of personal relation between the teacher and the taught, as still followed in the Gurukul institutions, as a check on growing student indiscipline in the country is to be welcomed.

M. P. PANDIT

A PRIMER OF ETHICS: By S. Rangachar. Pub. Rajaram Book House, Gandhi Bazar, Shimoga. Pp. 158, Price Rs. 3.00.

University students will welcome this simple and concise introduction to the science of ethics. The treatment is in the manner of a text-book for Indian students. The author has presented the concepts and theories of western thinkers on the subject in non-technical language. We would have liked to see in this book at least a rough outline of the Indian approach to Ethics.

M. P. PANDIT

KANNADA

VIVEKACHUDAMANI: By Swami Adidevananda. Pub. Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Mysore. Pp. 286. Price Rs. 4.00.

Whether *Vivekachudamani* is a work of Adi Shankara as asserted by some or a later composition by another author of the same name as held by others, the fact stands that it is a poem of unrivalled eminence and unique appeal in the Vedantic literature of adwaitic import. In simple, melodious verses (579 in number) the treatise gives not only the philosophy of the Adwaita but also the detailed steps of sadhana necessary to translate the teaching into practice. It explains the terminology common in Vedantic expositions and leads the mind step by step towards an understanding of the problem confronting man, the problem of Ignorance, and the way to cut at the root of it. Among the several important topics dealt with are the Four Aids of liberation, discriminating knowledge of the self and not-self, the doctrine of the five sheaths, the Guru, the means and the results of samadhi, the state of Jivanmukti.

The present publication in Kannada is a commendable work of Swami Adidevananda. It contains the text in Kannada script, word-for-word meaning, free rendering and notes which are informative and helpful. Swamiji gives references to parallel citations in the Shruti texts wherever possible and altogether makes the reading most profitable. He has added a very useful list of contents (subject-wise). Whatever the persuasion of one's philosophy and sadhana, a study of this work is bound to be helpful at one stage or another. M. P. PANDIT

BOOKS RECEIVED

THE GOSPEL OF RENUNCIATION: By M. K. Gandhi. Pub. Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad-14. Pp. 32. Price 35 nP.

TRADITIONS OF THE INDIAN ARMY: By Dharm Pal. Pp. 147. Price Rs. 1.75.

TRAINING STUDENTS IN LEADERSHIP: Pp. 49. Price 75 nP. INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY: By Jawaharlal Nehru. Pp. 612. Price Rs. 10.50. Published by the Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, Delhi.

THIRD FIVE YEAR PLAN: Published by the Planning Commission, Government of India. Pp. 788. Price Rs. 10.

GLIMPSES OF THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI: Published by Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai. Pp. 28.

BHAJA GOVINDAM: Pp. 67. Price 50 nP. SIVANANDALAHARI: Pp. 31. Price 75 nP. By P. Krishnamurthy, Telugu Pandit, Wesley Girls' High School, Secunderabad.

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NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA
KANKHAL, DT. SAHARANPUR.

PURNA KUMBHA MELA AT HARDWAR IN 1962

APPEAL

The famous religious fair, the Purna Kumbha Mela, held once in twelve years, will take place in the months of March and April 1962, on the banks of the sacred Ganges at Hardwar. The important dates for '*Snan*' are 4th March, 4th April and 13th April, 1962. Pilgrims and Sadhus from all parts of India come for the Mela for a sanctifying bath in the holy Ganges and their number usually swells to ten or twelve lacs.

Special arrangements have to be made for the medical care of the pilgrims, many of whom fall victims to various diseases during this period. The local branch of the Ramakrishna Mission whose humanitarian services are well known to the public, usually organizes Medical Relief Work on these occasions with its Indoor Hospital of fifty beds as the main Relief Centre. In view of the coming Mela, we have chalked out the following programme of service on the basis of our previous experience of such occasions —

1. A Relief Centre in the Sevashrama with arrangements for extra beds of 75 in the Indoor Hospital.
2. A Touring Relief Squad to visit various camps and treat patients who are unable to attend the Sevashrama or other Relief Centres.
3. A Board and Lodging Section to provide food and shelter for about one thousand pilgrims within the premises of the Sevashrama.

Qualified doctors, male nurses, compounders and volunteers will be necessary to man the work, and medicines, dressings and foodstuffs will have to be purchased for the purpose. It has been estimated that a sum of Rs. 35,000 will be needed to conduct this Relief Work.

We, therefore, earnestly appeal to the generous public to favour us with their kind and valuable help for this noble and humanitarian cause. Contributions in cash or kind will be thankfully received and acknowledged by —

1. The Secretary,
   Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama,
   Kankhal P.O., Saharanpur Dist., U.P.
2. The President,
   Ramakrishna Mission,
   Belur Math P.O., Howrah Dist.,
   West Bengal.
3. The Manager,
   Advaita Ashrama,
   5, Dehi Entally Road, Calcutta-14.

RAMAKRISHNA SEVASHRAMA, SHYAMALATAL

REPORT FOR JANUARY 1960 TO MARCH 1961

Started in 1914 in the interior parts of Himalayas the Sevashrama runs a Charitable Dispensary and Hospital. The In-door Department has 12 beds. The Out-door Department treated 9,067 patients including 7,636 new cases. The In-door Department treated 182 patients. It has got a Veterinary Department in which during the period the number of animals treated was 5 in the In-door and 2,202 in the Out-door Department, including 320 repeated cases. The management conveys their heartiest thanks to all the donors, subscribers, well-wishers and friends. The provision of 12 beds is found quite insufficient and therefore the management proposes to add 4 more beds and equip the Hospital with modern medical appliances for which funds will be required. The management therefore appeals to the general public to contribute liberally to the cause.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVA PRATISHTHAN, CALCUTTA

REPORT FOR APRIL 1960 TO MARCH 1961

The Hospital has in all 210 beds. It has got a well equipped Laboratory, a 500 m.a. X-ray Plant, a surgical unit and an all-electric Laundry Plant. It has an adequate number of resident medical and nursing staff besides a dozen of experienced top-ranking honorary visiting medical officers. The institution has been recognised as a Training School for Senior and Auxiliary Nurse-Midwives. 94 trainees were on the rolls in March, 1961. 5 Senior Nurse-Midwives and 37 Auxiliary Nurse-Midwives passed the final examination during 1960-61. The total number of patients treated in the Surgical, Medical, Osteric, Gynaecological and Paediatric departments was 44,951 out of which 5,844 were indoor cases. 14,926 ante-natal cases were treated in the out-door department and 921 in the indoor. The number of confinements was 3,703 during the

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period. The income was Rs. 4,07,521.47 and the expenditure Rs. 4,33,713.87 leaving a deficit of Rs. 26,192.40. The management express their sincere thanks to the donors, benefactors and others who have helped them.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA, RANGOON

REPORT FOR 1960

The Sevashrama (Charitable Hospital) started in 1921 has at present 162 beds in the different wards. On an average 700 patients attend the out-patients department of the hospital where modern facilities for diagnosis and treatment both medical and surgical, have been provided. During the year it treated 2,12,381 in the out-patients department of which 66,316 were new cases. The patients treated in the several special departments are as under. Eye 5838, ENT. 4351, Dental 8368, Deep X-Ray Therapy 1903, Physio-therapy 2943, X-Ray and Screening 2934, Minor operations 7124. 45,924 injections both intra-muscular and intra-venous were also given.

The indoor department treated 4030 patients during the year. The hospital has a Deep X-Ray Therapy plant, a cancer ward, a Nurses Training School, and a children's department besides the other general wards all under the supervision of a panel of highly qualified physicians and surgeons.

The demand for beds is always on the increase. The urgent needs of the hospital therefore are the reconstruction of the war-damaged wards, quarters for doctors, an additional quantity of radium etc. estimated to cost nearly K. 14,00,000. So while thanking the doctors for their services and the publiic and the Government for their unstinted support during these years the management fervently appeals for funds to meet the needs enumerated above and make good the deficit incurred in the year besides its maintenance expenses. The total expenditure incurred on the General Account during the year was K.5,11,499.49 while the income amounted to only K.3,67,350.16 leaving a deficit of K.1,44,149.33.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH, MADRAS

CHRIST JAYANTI

On the 24th December 1961, the Christmas Eve was observed in the Ramakrishna Math, Madras, in the evening. In the hall a portrait of Lord Christ was decorated. After Arati the function started at 6-30 p.m. with worship. After the opening song by Swami Priyananda, Swami Kailashananda welcomed the speaker and the devotees. Rev. Father C. N. Sequeira, S.J., Principal, Loyola College, Madras, spoke on the 'Life and Teachings of Lord Jesus Christ' in English. Prof. A. L. Krishnan, Principal, Jain College, Madras, proposed a vote of thanks after which there was a talk and reading from the Bible by Swami Suddhasattwananda.

Birthday Celebratians of the Holy Mother

The 109th Birthday Tithipuja of the Holy Mother, Sri Sarada Devi, was observed in the Math on 29th December, 1961. The day started with Mangalarati in the shrine at 5 a.m., followed by devotional songs and chantings of select portions from Gita, Upanishads etc.

Worship in the shrine was started at 8 a.m. and came to a close at 1-30 p.m., after the Homa was performed. About 2,000 devotees and 1,100 Daridranarayanas were served with food prasad. After the evening service in the shrine, selected teachings of the Holy Mother were read and some senior Swamis spoke.

The public meeting came off on Sunday the 31st December, 1961 at 3-30 p.m. Mrs. C. K. Handoo, M.A. of Bombay presided on the occasion. The meeting commenced with Bhajan by the pupils of the Avvai Home, which was followed by a short prayer by the students of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission Sarada Vidyalaya High School. The audience observed silence for a minute, after which Dr. Miss Irawati, Principal, Queen Mary's College welcomed the distinguished President, lecturers and others. She lay stress on the importance and auspiciousness of the occasion and message of the Holy Mother in the present context of world turmoil.

After the opening remarks of the President, Srimati Kamakshi Ramakrishnan spoke in Tamil on the incomprehensible greatness of the Holy Mother. She said: 'Her life could be compared only with that of Sri Ramakrishna. They were both born, and brought up in the unsullied pure atmosphere of the village conducive to spiritual life. Her relation with her consort Sri Ramakrishna was perfectly of a divine character. Their association was for the edification of humanity. Each saw in the other the 'Divine Mother'. In her were wonderfully blended the ideals of a nun, a wife, and a mother. In short she was perfection personified.'

The Salem Sisters, Gauri and Jayalakshmi treated the audience to some fine music, singing Tiruppavai and other religious songs.

Mrs. Susheela Inder Sain and Mrs. G. Sundari Sankaran then spoke in Hindi and Telugu respectively. The Telugu speaker stressed on the

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Holy Mother's devotion to the Master and dedication of her life to silent propagation of the Master's message. She further said that the Holy Mother represented the ideal self-denying motherhood, unique in human history. Recitation by some of the prize winners and distribution of prizes were next in the programme. The President subsequently spoke on the message of the Holy Mother and stressed the practicability of her message in the modern world.

After a vote of thanks by Srimati Savitri Rajan the meeting came to a close. Arati in the shrine was then performed followed by devotional singing for about an hour by the Math Bhajana party headed by Swami Priyananda with which the day's celebrations ended.

Swami Vivekananda Centenary Celebrations

A meeting of the citizens of Madras was held on 7-1-1962 at 5 p.m. at the premises of Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras-4, to form the Swami Vivekananda Centenary Celebration Committee and formulate suitable plans for the celebrations during the year 1963-1964.

After Vedic prayers, Sri V. N. Subbarayan proposed Dr C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar to the chair. Dr S. Ramakrishnan seconded the proposal, the motion was carried unanimously and with acclamation.

Dr C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar then took the chair.

Swami Kailashananda, President of Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, welcomed the gathering and said that it was fitting that Madras should take a prominent part in the centenary celebration of Swami Vivekananda in view of the close association of Swamiji with the people of Madras and the South and the great support he received from them.

Hon'ble Sri C. Subramaniam, Finance and Education Minister of Madras, in a speech in English expressed the necessity for propagating the spiritual message of Swami Vivekananda throughout the world which was now full of conflicts and confusion.

Sri M. P. Sivagnanam, speaking in Tamil, emphasised the cultural unity of the people and appealed to them to sink all differences and make the celebration a grand success.

Sri K. S. Ramaswami Sastri recalled his contact with Swami Vivekananda, when the latter stayed with his father in Trivandrum and gave a graphic description of the spectacular reception given to Swamiji at Madras on his return from America.

Dr C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar moved the following resolution from the chair:

'This meeting of the citizens of Madras convened at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras on Sunday the 7th January 1962, resolves that necessary steps be taken to celebrate in a fitting manner in the City and throughout the State of Madras, on convenient dates during the period January, 1963 to January 1964, the Birth Centenary of Swami Vivekananda, the chosen disciple of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna the founder of the world-wide Ramakrishna Math and Mission and the great Patriot-Saint of India who roused his fellow countrymen to a consciousness of their immortal spiritual heritage and who beginning from the Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893, raised India's status high in the estimation of the people of the West by his soul-stirring exposition of the universal message of Harmony and Peace.'

In commending the resolution for acceptance, Dr Aiyar said that the contributions made by Swami Vivekananda and Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa were complementary to each other. He said that it was the personality and the sublimity of Swamiji that transfused his utterances and left an indelible impression. Dr Aiyar suggested that the Ice House in Triplicane, where Swamiji stayed, might be named as Vivekananda House. This suggestion was applauded with loud and prolonged cheers by the public.

Dr P. V. Cherian, made a speech in support of the resolution.

The motion was unanimously carried.

Sri S. K. Sivaraman moved a resolution to form the Celebration Committee which was seconded by Sri O. V. Chinnaswami and was carried unanimously.

Sri S. Krishna Iyer then moved a resolution for constituting the Executive Committee which was seconded by Sri A. L. Krishnan and was carried unanimously.

Sri V. Pandurangiah moved an appeal, the text of which is published elsewhere.

Sri V. K. Ramaswami Mudaliar supported the appeal.

Sri K. Balasubramania Iyer proposed a vote of thanks.

The 127th Birthday of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna falls on Thursday, 8th March 1962.

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH, MADRAS-4

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

APPEAL

At a meeting of the citizens of Madras held on 7-1-62 in the premises of Sri Ramakrishna Math, under the Presidentship of Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, it was decided to celebrate the Birth Centenary of Swami Vivekananda, the great Patriot-Saint of India, in a fitting manner during the year 1963-64. A Centenary Committee with the Vice-President of India, the Governor of Madras and the Chief Minister of Madras as Patrons and consisting of distinguished citizens, has been constituted. The following are some of the main items of the celebrations :

(1) Construction of a well equipped Library, Reading Room, Children's Corner and Auditorium, near the Math, in commemoration of the Centenary.
(2) Installation of a life-size statue of Swami Vivekananda in the Marina opposite to the Ice House.
(3) Endowment of a Chair in the name of Swami Vivekananda in the University of Madras.
(4) Publication of the Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda in Tamil and Telugu in 10 volumes each.
(5) Free distribution of booklets embodying the life and the message of Swami Vivekananda.
(6) Exhibition depicting some notable episodes from the Swamiji's life.
(7) Arranging public meetings, inter-religious conferences, seminars, elocution competitions.
(8) Feeding of the poor and distribution of clothes to them.

The celebrations will take place both in the City of Madras and in the Districts. It is roughly estimated that the entire celebration including the permanent memorials would cost about Rs. 6 lakhs. We expect our popular governments both at the Centre and the State to give substantial aid to this noble cause. The major portion will however have to be met by contributions from public.

We, the undersigned, earnestly request one and all in the South and the Madras City in particular to respond generously to this appeal for funds.

Contributions either in cash or by cheque drawn in favour of " Swami Vivekananda Centenary Account " may kindly be sent to the Secretary, Swami Vivekananda Centenary Committee, C/o. Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras-4, who will issue official receipts for the same.

K. Kamaraj
C. Subramaniam
A. Lakshmanaswamy Mudaliar
M. Bhaktavatsalam
C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar
V. T. Krishnamachari
P. V. Cherian
M. A. Muthia Chettiar
S. Anantaramakrishnan
C. R. Srinivasan
K. Balasubramanya Aiyar
O. V. Alagesan
Muthulakshmi Reddy
Ramanath Goenka
G. Narasimhan
S. V. Ramamoorthy
A. M. M. Murugappa Chettiar
V. C. Ganesan
B. Nagi Reddy
K. Kuchelar
K. S. Ramaswamy Sastri
S. Varadachari
T. S. Santhanam
Mary Clubwala Jadav
R. S. Subbalakshmi
S. S. Vasan
T. Sadasivan
C. S. Loganatha Mudaliar
V. K. Ramaswamy Mudaliar
V. Pandurangayya
J. V. Somayajulu
P. Suryanarayana
M. P. Sivagnanam
B. Jagannath Das
Lalchand Dadha
M. Ct. Muthiah
Karumuttu Thiagarajan
Swami Kailashananda

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.... Be bold and face
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease.
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XLVIII MARCH 1962 No. 11

FROM THE TREE OF DIVINE LORE

Sri Gauranga's leisure was spent in learned sessions by the side of the Ganga and wanderings through different quarters of the town. The citizens greeted the feet of the Lord with the greatest affection, no sooner they caught sight of Him. The ladies said: 'He is the god of love manifest!' The learned regarded Him as the equal of the celestial sage Brihaspati; to the yogis He appeared to possess the realised body. The wicked viewed Him with terror, as the very Form of Death. If the Lord greeted a person only once, he was thereby reduced to His prisoner and wore round his neck the collar of His Love. He was evidently the universal Favourite of both, Hindus and Mussalmans alike, and was feared by all the impious scholars and evil-doers.

On His return home Sri Gaursundar seated Himself at the door of the room consecrated to the worship of Vishnu. As He caught sight of the rising full-moon, His heart was filled with loving recollections of the moon of Brindavana, and He began to discourse strains of the Flute, whose sweetness is never experienced in this world. But no one could catch it except His mother.

On hearing the notes of the Flute that bewitches the triple universe, the mother fainted on the spot by complete immersion in the ocean of Bliss. Recovering her external consciousness, she perceived the sound to proceed from the direction where Gaursundar was seated. Coming out of the room, she found her Son still sitting at Vishnu's doorstep, and beheld the disc of the moon in the bosom of her Son.

One night mother Sachi heard hundreds of people singing and playing on musical instruments. She heard sounds as of dance, the tread of feet, as if a vast *Rāsa* (Pastime) was in progress. One day she found that all the houses, the rooms, doors, and windows were made exclusively of light. Thus did Sri Gaursundar, Wearer of the Garland of Wild Flowers, abide in His Eternal Sport, in concealment; such being His Pleasure. Though manifesting Himself in many a way He, yet, could not be recognised even by any of His Own servants.

(Nishikanta Sanyal: *Sri Krishna-Chaitanya*)
From accounts by Thākur Brindāvandās.

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA — THE UNIQUE TEACHER

'As long as I live so long do I learn', were the significant words that fell from the lips of Sri Ramakrishna. What a wealth of meaning is contained in this pithy saying! Man's life itself is a schooling, our learning starts from the moment we are born. The child that is born cries, we know not why, and the old dame, an expert in bringing up children, thrusts a wick dipped in syrup into its mouth, a drop of that sweet potation falls into the mouth and in a desperate bid to throw away the wick the child closes its mouth. The wick is pressed and squeezed, more of that liquid gets on to the tongue, the throat is moistened, the stomach gets the first feed. The child learns its first lesson, it now no more tries to throw off the wick but sucks and is quiet. The child grows and as it grows it learns to turn from side to side and front to back, to crawl, to toddle, to lisp a few words, to walk and finally to talk. All this it learns by observation and imitation, by experience and help. Next it is sent to school to study the three 'R's and there comes the regular teacher with the label, as it were. The child is apt to think that he is its first teacher but when it grows up and analyses as afore it will come to a different conclusion. The old dame was its first teacher though it did not know of it. Even so our learning does not end with the school or college education. There are infinite number of things which we learn later in life and one such thing is : the meaning of life, why are we born, whence do we come, whither do we go and so on. Why do we learn all these ? Nature compels us to do so. In the youthful state of our life everything looks so bright that we refuse to believe that there will be anything but sunshine all throughout the rest of our life. But is it possible that the sun will shine all through the day and the night and all through the year? Even in the polar regions where it is said there is light throughout the day and the night, darkness follows after six months. It is in the very nature of things impossible that all will be sunshine only, yet in that vigorous state we like to visualize and dream that all will be well. All will be enjoyment. But as sure as night follows day sorrow follows joy and then all our fine airy castles vanish and we feel forlorn and helpless. We desperately seek for the company of one who can take us across this shoreless ocean of misery, to guide us out of this labyrinth of birth and death. Some may learn this early and some may discover it late in life, some at the first stroke of misery may open their eyes and yet some others may not like to wake up from their dream-world even after being continuously harassed by sorrow. The latter are hopelessly lost and till they have had their fill of misery they would not listen but the others will seek their guide and God will help them in their search.

And what kind of teacher should he be? The task is a difficult one, so the master should be equal to the task, as a teacher of Chemistry cannot teach Economics, so here too, a teacher who has satisfaction in his senses cannot teach how to go beyond the senses. It, therefore, naturally follows that one who has reached the goal, realised God or one who lives a spiritual life guided by one who had realised God can only be a true teacher. Sri Sankara describes him in the following words :

'One who is versed in the Vedas, devoid of sin, unsmitten by desire, and a knower of Brahman *par excellence,* who has withdrawn himself in Brahman, who is calm like the fire that has consumed its fuel, who is an ocean of compassion without any reason, and who is a friend of all who bow down to him.'[1] Note the words 'ocean of compassion without any reason'. It is not for the sake of money or

[1] श्रोत्रियोऽवृजिनोऽकामहतो यो ब्रह्मवित्तमः ब्रह्मण्युपरतः शान्तो निरंधन इवानलः अहेतुक दयासिन्धुर्बन्धुरानमतां सताम् ॥ (*Vivekachudamani,* 33)

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service or for any other consideration that he teaches the aspirant but looking into his genuineness and out of compassion. This is not the independent opinion of Sri Sankara but a restatement of what the *Sruti* says. In the *Mundakopanishad* we come across the verses wherein it describes, what type of a teacher the aspirant is to approach. 'He should approach a teacher who is versed in the Vedas and constantly devoted to Brahman.'[2]

Now, what is meant by the Vedas? The Hindus do not mean any books when they say that Vedas are eternal, they mean the principles that are contained in the books and which were revealed to the ancient Rishis, so too whatever is revealed about God or Atman or Brahman is Veda, whether it is in the modern world or the ancient. And to whom such revelations come is a Rishi. The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* speaking about revelation says :

"In the beginning there was only Brahman and It knew Itself, that 'I am Brahman', therefore It became all and he among the devas, among the rishis and among the men who knew that he was Brahman became Brahman. Seeing this Brahman only did Rishi Vamadeva declare, 'I was the Manu, I was the Sun'. Similarly *even now* those who come to know they are Brahman become everything." (1. 4. 10)[3] So the revelations are not confined to any age and those who realise really become That, are the real Rishis.

In the present age Sri Ramakrishna demonstrated this fact, this principle in his own life. He had undergone every type of *sadhana* and through every path he had attained spiritual illumination. What Rishi Vamadeva of old realised was realised by Sri Ramakrishna too, nay even more, he realised that Brahman through the varied paths. And in his compassion he taught these principles to all those who sincerely approached him, according to their capacity to grasp and practise. The Divine Mother brought to him hundreds and thousands of people but he saw most of them were like 'one seer of milk with five seers of water' dilute, with no grit, no steady yearning for God. This was too much for him. He had by his sadhanas shattered his frame and could not undertake to reform so many luke-warm devotees. He found the task too tiresome and unproductive. He prayed to the Mother to send some pure souls so that he could bequeath to them the spiritual treasure he had amassed. It was really the hankering of a true Guru for fit recipients which is not unusual. Do we not hear the Rishis of old praying: 'Let the celibate students come to me more and more?'[4] Following them the modern Rishi too prayed to the Divine Mother in his own simple way for the company of pure souls.

The Mother heard his prayer and there came to him every God-hungry soul, each one with a different temperament and different tendencies, differently inclined and differently evolved. He taught them all not the same disciplines, not the same idea, but each according to the aspirant's own temperament and nature. It is said that Sri Krishna during the *Rasa Krida*, appeared at the side of each milkmaid multiplying himself as it were into as many Krishnas as there were gopis. Similarly Sri Ramakrishna became many to suit the needs of his disciples. Each one thought he was loved most by the Master and each one thought the Master belonged to the faith that he believed in, so thoroughly could he identify himself with the principles and method of approach of every sect, for did he not practise them all in his own life?

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[2] स गुरुमेवाभिगच्छेत् श्रोत्रियं ब्रह्मनिष्ठम् ।

[3] ब्रह्म वा इदमग्र आसीत्तदात्मानमेवावेत् । अहं ब्रह्मास्मीति । तस्मात्तत्सर्वमभवत्तद्यो यो देवानां प्रत्यबुध्यत स एव तदभवत्तथार्षीणां तथा मनुष्याणां तद्धैतत्पश्यन्नृषिर्वामदेवः प्रतिपेदेऽहं मनुरभवं सूर्यश्चेति । तदिदमप्येतर्हि य एवं वेदाहं ब्रह्मास्मीति स इदं सर्वं भवति ।

[4] आमायन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः विमायन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः प्रमायन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः ।

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Sri Ramakrishna was unique as a teacher both in his realisations and in his method of teaching. He went through all the spiritual practices enjoined by the various sects and various religions and realised the goal of all and came to the conclusion that God was one though different people called Him by different names. He was now thoroughly equipped to teach every type of individual, so when they came with different *samskaras* he was glad that he could develop them all in their own way. Like a master artist he rounded their angularities, put the proper shade of colour at the proper place and made out of them wonderful pictures that the world had ever seen, but, for that he had to labour hard. This he ungrudgingly and unreservedly did.

Narendranath was one of those who came to Sri Ramakrishna with grave doubts as to the very existence of God. A brilliant lad, truthful, physically strong, brought up in a religious atmosphere by the mother and in an atmosphere of free thinking by the father, he made his presence felt wheresoever he went. Even from his boyhood days he was the leader of his group. He believed in the existence of God until he joined the college and read Western philosophy and logic. It was then that he began to entertain doubts as to the existence of God. He could never believe in anything but the truth. So, if God was a doubtful entity, how could he believe in Him! At the same time how could he disbelieve what his innate nature asserted to be true! Truth must be known at all costs. It was then, in his search for a person who had seen God, that he came to Sri Ramakrishna. He had tried all the spiritual luminaries of Calcutta of that time but none could give him the definite answer he wanted, viz. that they had seen God. With an eager heart and genuine longing did Narendra then turn to Sri Ramakrishna.

Sri Ramakrishna, on the other hand, we have seen, was eagerly pining for the company of pure souls, and so when the God-hungry soul met the soul-hungry God it is difficult to say who was more happy. Narendra, of course, had heard about the Master and came to verify but how could Sri Ramakrishna know about Narendra and his spiritual potentialities! That was Sri Ramakrishna's uniqueness, he could read a person's nature and potentialities from his very physical features. He used to say, 'I can see inside a person through his eyes as one sees the objects in a room through the glass doors.' So it was not difficult at all for Sri Ramakrishna to evaluate Narendra's nature; besides he had a prevision of Narendra's coming, as also about his antecedents. He had seen him in a vision as one of the Saptarshis deeply absorbed in meditation in a region where even the gods feared to peep. He had understood that Narendra's aptitude was for the formless and attributeless Brahman. Therefore he trained him accordingly.

The foundation of Sri Ramakrishna's method of teaching lay in his love for the disciples. It flowed towards all of them in a slightly more or a slightly lesser degree but it was at any time perfectly pure and more than what they received in their homes. By this pure love Sri Ramakrishna won their hearts within a very short time. It did not take more than three meetings for Sri Ramakrishna to have them surrender to him. So irresistible was his love, so sincere was his affection. There was never that negative method of teaching seen in him. He never told them that the love of the father or mother was nothing but selfish, never said that the tears of the wife were a sham, but his love towards them was so strong that all other love faded into insignificance. Even the parents of the young boys were so charmed by his sweet behaviour that they could not say no to his request of keeping the boys with him. Sometimes it was the mother who willingly surrendered her son and sometimes it was the mother-in-law who felt blessed that her son-in-law had won the affection of the Master. Such was the uniqueness of his method of teaching.

Sri Ramakrishna established a particular type of relation with each one of his disciples: of a mother, of a friend or of a master. Rakhal (later Swami Brahmananda) was like a child

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to him, for the Divine Mother had shown Sri Ramakrishna that Rakhal was his spiritual son. Rakhal too felt like a child of five or six in the presence of the Master, innocent and looking up to him for guidance. When Rakhal first came to the Master, Hriday, the constant attendant during the *sadhana* period of the Master's life, had left Dakshineswar and the Master was feeling much inconvenience about taking care of even his body. There was no knowing when he would go into trance and somebody was necessary to take care of him at that time, so he kept Rakhal with him. At the same time Sri Ramakrishna also trained Rakhal in meditation, and in the strict observances of certain disciplines such as speaking truth, controlling one's temper, observing restraint in eating, etc.

Once Sri Ramakrishna noticing a cloud of ignorance on Rakhal's face wanted to know what wrong he had done, but the latter could not recount of having done anything bad. Then Sri Ramakrishna asked him if he had uttered any lie, at this Rakhal remembered to have told a fib in fun. Sri Ramakrishna disapproved of this act and said that if one wanted to lead a spiritual life, one should tell the exact truth. Another time Rakhal felt a dryness in his heart and left meditation for a few days; noticing this Sri Ramakrishna said that it was quite necessary that an aspirant maintained regularity in his spiritual disciplines, whether he felt inclination to do so or not. The Master, sometimes, in order to impress the indispensability of a particular discipline would purposely test the disciple in it. One such occasion was when Sri Ramakrishna roused the anger of Rakhal. Rakhal was massaging the Master's feet with oil and at the same time requesting the Master to bestow on him the power to attain transcendental visions. The Master at first ignored his request but when he persisted he turned on him with harsh words. Rakhal felt offended, broke the oil bottle on the ground and ran away from the Master's room. However, as he neared the gate of the temple garden his legs failed him and like one struck with paralysis he sank to the ground. Meanwhile the Master had called his nephew Ramlal and had sent him to pacify Rakhal and bring him back. Sri Ramakrishna smiled as Rakhal returned and said, 'You see, you could not go beyond the circle I had drawn round you.' After a few moments he continued, 'Do you know why I made you angry? There was a purpose behind it. One who wants to gain visions of God must control his passions like anger!' Sri Ramakrishna wanted to teach this to his disciple so that he could remember it for ever.

He did not only correct them when they went wrong but gave a helping hand in their efforts to realise God. Once Rakhal in spite of his best efforts found it impossible to meditate. Sri Ramakrishna called Rakhal to his side and wrote something on his tongue and thus removed all the obstacles in his path of meditation. He would encourage his disciples to spend long hours in spiritual practices. He would send them to the Panchavati in the mornings or wake up those of his disciples who lived at Dakshineswar at dead of night and ask them to meditate. He sang to them devotional songs occasionally and kindled their love for God. His talks, his ecstasies and his life went further to contribute to the moulding of their lives. In the midst of devotees now going into ecstasy, now singing devotional songs, now dancing, he would at dusk be completely in-drawn. A deep silence charged with spirituality settled down around him.

Sri Ramakrishna did not prescribe the same set of disciplines to one and all who came to him. Each devotee's propensities were gauged and proper disciplines were prescribed. Sarada Prasanna (later Swami Trigunatitananda) came from an aristocratic family and looked down upon doing personal service. Sri Ramakrishna noticed this trait of the boy and on his second visit to him asked him to bring water and wash his feet. The boy had some friends with him, before whom he felt hesitant to obey the Master's command but when Sri Ramakrishna insisted Sarada had no other go but to obey. One is here reminded of Sri Krishna's instruction to Arjuna in the *Gita* as how to

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approach a guru 'Know that by prostration, by inquiry and by service'.[5]

To one like Harinath (Swami Turiyananda) who was a deep student of the Gita and the Upanishads and bent towards the ideal of Advaita Vedanta, studying and meditating on these subjects Sri Ramakrishna said, 'What you are doing is very good. But what does the Vedanta philosophy teach except that Brahman alone is real and everything else unreal? Then why don't you give up the unreal and cling to the Real?' A flood of light was thrown on the truths of Vedanta by these remarks of the Master. Again a few days later the Master was explaining to the devotees how difficult it was for man, a puny creature as he was, to think that the tangibly experienced world was unreal unless he received God's special grace. The Master's songs after these remarks eulogising the grace of God made Harinath learn to surrender himself at the feet of the Lord.

Sri Ramakrishna's solicitude for the spiritual welfare of humanity and specially for those pure souls who came to him is incomparable. To Nitya Niranjan Ghosh (later Swami Niranjanananda) who was associating with spiritualists, he once feelingly, said, 'If you think of ghosts and spooks you will become like them. If on the other hand you think of God, divine will be your life'. So fervent and touching were the words of the Master that Niranjan severed all connections with the spiritualists. When he next visited Sri Ramakrishna the latter was so moved on seeing Niranjan that he ran to him and warmly embracing him said, 'My boy, days are passing, when will you realise God?' Who could withhold himself from such love and such solicitude?

With Baburam — pre-monastic name of Swami Premananda — Sri Ramakrishna's relation was peculiar. His mother had become the Master's devotee a short time after Baburam had been visiting him. When, therefore, the Master asked her to allow her son to remain with him she considered it a privilege and readily agreed. Baburam's purity was so immaculate that Sri Ramakrishna used to say that he was pure unto the very marrow. The Master used to call him *daradi*, companion. So when the boy began to stay with Sri Ramakrishna the latter's life left a deep impression upon him. His yearning for God-vision increased and he asked the Master to bless him with Bhava. But Sri Ramakrishna who was humility personified and never looked upon himself as a teacher said 'I shall ask the Divine Mother,' and later said, 'Mother says you will have knowledge,' and trained him to be a fit receptacle for jnana.

Most of the above mentioned disciples of the Master had a good school or college education but among his disciples there was one who was literally illiterate. A servant boy of Ramachandra Dutta, a householder disciple of the Master, Latu came to Sri Ramakrishna having heard about him from the lips of his employer. At the very first meeting Sri Ramakrishna was greatly impressed with the spiritual potentiality of the boy and the boy too was greatly drawn to the Master. After this meeting Latu's zeal in the household work dwindled and his mind wandered towards the God-man of Dakshineswar. He expressed his wish to give up the job and stay at Dakshineswar. At this time Sri Ramakrishna too wanted an attendant and proposed the name of Latu to Ramachandra Dutta. The latter agreed to the proposal and thus Latu came to live with the Master. Latu's one aim in life now was to serve the Master faithfully and with devotion. By service to the Guru alone he attained to great spiritual heights, the like of which few have experienced. To him the words of the Master were the most authentic scriptures and he never deviated even by a letter from what he heard from the Master. Once after the day's heavy work, perhaps tired, Latu was found sleeping in the evening. Sri Ramakrishna woke him up and said, 'If you sleep at such a time when will you meditate?' and that was enough, Latu for the rest of his life never slept at night. He would have a

[5] तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया।

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short nap during the day time and pass the whole night in meditation.

Sri Ramakrishna encouraged his disciples to test him, as a money changer tests his coins, though it meant sometimes physical torment to himself. His one advice to those who came seeking his help for God-realisation was to give up 'woman and gold', which he said were the two great obstacles in the path of the aspirant. Narendra observed that Sri Ramakrishna could not touch money without feeling great pain and he also heard him say that even an unconscious touch, put his body into convulsions. Narendra wanted to test the truth of this statement and one day when the Master was away he secreted a piece of coin in his bed and awaited for his return. After sometime Sri Ramakrishna returned to the room and sat on his bed but no sooner did he sit than he jumped up like one stung by a scorpion. The attendants greatly perturbed removed the sheets and saw the coin. Sri Ramakrishna understood the meaning of it all but he was glad that his disciples verified for themselves before accepting what he said.

Another day, Yogin, (later Swami Yogananda) who was living with the Master for some time in his own room did not see Sri Ramakrishna on his bed when he woke up in the middle of the night. A doubt crept in young Yogin's mind, had the Master gone to the *nahabat* where his wife lived? He wanted to ascertain; so getting up he walked out of the room and placing himself near the *nahabat* waited for Sri Ramakrishna. But a few moments later Yogin saw Sri Ramakrishna coming from the side of the Panchavati and felt terribly ashamed of himself, for having doubted the purity of the Master. Sri Ramakrishna, however, put him at his ease by saying that it was quite proper that he should test the guru by day and by night before accepting him as such. A teaching the parallel to which we do not come across. We have heard of disciples being tested by the teacher but never a teacher being tested by the disciples and the teacher approving of the act. Sri Ramakrishna sets a new standard, as it were, for the teacher and thereby safeguards the interests of all the future aspirants.

Sri Ramakrishna was not only himself liberal in his views but liberalised the views of all those who came in contact with him, whether they be his disciples or his teachers. On finding Narendra condemning, some of the tantric practices, Sri Ramakrishna had said, 'My boy, why do you condemn it, that is also a path; a mansion has got a back door too through which the scavenger enters. What is required is sincerity and faith.' Another day he would be talking to the orthodox Vaishnavas like Balaram's father about the greatness of the Vaishnava cult but in the end, however, he would leave his own mark of liberalism on them too, convincing them that it was wrong to consider that God could be achieved through only their way and not that of others'. Sri Tota Puri, the teacher of the Master in Advaitic practices never believed in the relative aspect of the God-head and used to make fun of Sri Ramakrishna when he used to sing clapping his hands, but Sri Ramakrishna told him that the personal aspect of the Divine was as real as the impersonal Brahman of Vedanta. Tota Puri could not concede this at first but after some time he was attacked with dysentery and could not practise meditation. However much he tried, the mind would run towards the excruciating pain of the body instead of merging in Brahman. Tota Puri found no use for the body which could not help the mind to merge itself into the Atman. He wanted to drown himself and at dead of night he went to the brimming Ganga and slowly walked into it. He walked and walked but that night the water in the Ganga was no more than knee-deep for him though he went right across the river. He was surprised, he turned back and all at once the veil lifted from his mind's eye and he saw the Mother everywhere. His heart full of devotion he returned to the temple garden, a changed personality, fully believing in the Sakti aspect of God.

Sri Ramakrishna did not ask all to give up the world and be sannyasins, for he knew very

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few were fit to give up every kind of desire, so he had to teach those who lived in the world how to get devotion to God. He could not prescribe to them severe practices, for the householders after their long toil for bread would not find it easy to go through an arduous discipline. They had not much leisure, besides they were to be allowed some freedom to satisfy their desires. Therefore to some he told to visit him now and then, to some to take the name of God at least twice a day, once before leaving the bed in the morning and again before retiring to bed at night. Another instruction to them was to pray to God sincerely, not for wealth, not for material prosperity, but for devotion. 'Retire into solitude forgetting all about the world and exclusively devote the time in the contemplation of God for a few days occasionally,' were some of the disciplines he prescribed for the householders.

One-pointed attention to God, while praying, he insisted upon and even as early as his days of *sadhana* he could not bear an aspirant ruminating over secular things when he was offering prayers to God. Sri Ramakrishna was once singing some songs on the Divine Mother in the temple of Bhavatarini at the request of Rani Rasmani, who had come to offer worship to the Mother. All of a sudden he stopped singing and going over to the Rani sharply rebuked her, remonstrating at the same time, 'Here too those thoughts'. The attendants and officers of the temple were all taken aback but the Rani, a true devotee that she was, felt ashamed for having allowed her mind to wander away from her Chosen Ideal. This habit of punishing the delinquents he got over after much prayer to the Divine Mother.

In the case of some *sadhakas,* however, he took upon himself the responsibility of their welfare when they surrendered to him completely. An example of this is Sri Girish Chandra Ghosh. A dramatist and manager of a theatre he was given to the life of a Bohemian when he came in contact with Sri Ramakrishna. But a few visits to the Master created an urge in him to lead an unsullied life. He, therefore asked the Master what he was to do. The Master told him to think of God morning and evening but Girish could not promise that, then the Master asked him to think of God just before partaking food. Girish was nonplussed, there was no regular time for his meals, neither was there any knowing in what condition he would be at the time he took food. The Master then said, 'You give me the Power of Attorney and I shall do whatever is necessary for you.' Girish was glad but soon he came to know that no more had he any freedom to assert his ego, he had to think of Sri Ramakrishna before he began any work and had to say, 'If it is the will of God I shall do this.' Soon he had to take leave of all vices to remember that he had to think of God first before doing any work. Thus was turned a sinner into a saint, and all that without any gruelling practices.

Mahendranath Gupta, a householder disciple of the Master, has himself described his transformation at the hands of Sri Ramakrishna in his immortal work, *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna.* The first thing Sri Ramakrishna impressed upon him was that those who had spiritual urge in them should not submerge it by entering the worldly life. Even in the household, said the Master, one should live like a maid servant in a rich man's house —taking care of her master's children and house as if they were her own but all the time being aware that her children and her real home was in her native village. Mahendranath Gupta, 'M' as he used to term himself, has described vividly, how being educated in the Western way and imbued with the philosophical ideas of the West he had tried to argue with the Master but was humbled before his statements coming as they were from his direct perception of Reality and carried conviction even to a sceptic mind. When he came to Sri Ramakrishna he considered academic education as knowledge and absence of it as ignorance. Sri Ramakrishna in his inimitable way corrected this wrong notion of 'M' and indelibly impressed upon him that real know-

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ledge was that which led one Godwards and that all else was ignorance.

Another time he argued with the Master was when he said that though God had a form it was not certainly the clay image. Sri Ramakrishna remonstrated that it was not the clay or the stone that was worshipped but the Spirit behind it. But when 'M' continued to argue that one should explain to the people that the clay image is not God but that while worshipping it they should have God in view and not the clay image, sharp came the rebuke from Sri Ramakrishna, "That's the one hobby of you Calcutta people giving lectures and bringing others to the light! Nobody ever stops to consider how to get the light himself. ... He who is the Lord of the universe will teach everyone. ... Suppose there is an error in worshipping the clay image doesn't God know, that through it he alone is being invoked?" That silenced 'M'. He never again argued with the Master finding how hollow sounded reason before spiritual realisation. Then onwards 'M' followed the Master's bidding to sanctify his own life.

Gopal's mother, an elderly woman of Kamarhatty, was one of the women disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. A child widow, she felt a great attraction for Gopala (Baby Krishna), and had spent many years in *sadhana* and was quite old when she came to Sri Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar. But when she came Sri Ramakrishna was there standing at his door as if eagerly expecting her. He received her with her companion and in the course of the conversation said, 'Bhakti is the only thing to be attained in this life'. Gopal's mother — Aghoremani Devi — was greatly attracted to Sri Ramakrishna. She repeated her visits to him. In her presence Sri Ramakrishna was just like a child and began to behave like a petulant boy demanding one thing or other. She first thought, 'what kind of holy man is he, always asking for food,' but soon she was blessed with the vision of her Chosen Ideal in Sri Ramakrishna, and came to consider him none other than her beloved Gopala. By Sri Ramakrishna's grace the simple and guileless woman had the continuous vision of her Ishta for six months at a stretch. Sri Ramakrishna thus fulfilled the saying of the *Gita* 'In whichever way they worship me in that way I fulfil their desires.'

Thus by his unparalleled love and his genuine desire for their welfare Sri Ramakrishna moulded the life of the disciples in such a way that they may be acceptable as teachers not only to India but to the world as a whole. The freedom he allowed the young boys to develop in their own way and also the encouragement that he gave them to be self-confident helped them a good deal when they were in later days faced with mountain-high obstacles. Another fundamental teaching which he often repeated was, not to spoil any one's natural propensities. That all these teachings were apt and necessary for the present generation and the generations to come has been amply proved by the trend of events in the religious life of the world.

Sri Ramakrishna has left a vast treasure to us in the form of his talks and advice. It is now left to us to be benefited by them and make as much as possible of that our own. Man in every walk of life and in every station, placed in any environment will surely find solutions for all his problems by diving into this vast ocean of his ambrosial teachings. Let us remember again the line with which we began, 'As long as I live so long do I learn', and learn that — apart from the meaning mentioned in the beginning — it also teaches us to be humble. As without a hollow no water can collect, so without humility nothing can be learnt. So let us be humble and make our lives blessed.

Money is not meant for luxuries or creature comforts or for buying a position in society. Money enables a man to get food and drink, build a house, worship the Deity, serve devotees and holy men, and help the poor when he happens to meet them. These are the good uses of money. — SRI RAMAKRISHNA

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MESSAGE OF THE GITA

SWAMI VIJNANANDA

The Bhagavad Gita has a unique place in the realm of Indian philosophy and religion. Though a *Smriti,* it is traditionally considered to be as authoritative a scripture as the *Upanishads* and the *Brahmasutras.* It is placed along with the latter two to constitute what is called the *Prasthanatraya.* In it are gathered together in a nutshell all the fundamental concepts of Indian philosophy and religion. All the three great Acharyas have written elaborate commentaries on it and have sought to sustain and strengthen their respective philosophical doctrines.

The Gita is more popular than either the *Upanishads* or the *Brahmasutras.* Its authoritativeness and popularity considered together, it may be safely said to stand first in the ranks of all Indian scriptures. Its popularity today, if anything, is on the increase in India as well as outside. There are several reasons that account for its popularity. The first reason is that it forms the heart of our great national epic, the *Mahabharata.* Secondly, it is in the form of a beautiful dialogue on a lofty theme of great significance to the practical life of man. The dialogue is between two eminent persons — Sri Krishna and Arjuna — the former an incarnation of God and hence an embodiment of all divine excellences and the latter a Kshatriya hero of great renown embodying in himself several human virtues. Again, the occasion, that brought forth the Gita from the lips of the Lord, was when it forebode imminent danger to *dharma.* But these reasons, cogent as they are, alone would not explain the popularity of the Gita. The Gita is of universal interest because it has got a specific message to humanity. A message which holds good even today and which will hold good for all time to come. In it Lord Sri Krishna teaches Arjuna how to face and overcome the moral dilemma that was confronting him on the battle-field. Sri Krishna chose that occasion to deal with the moral principles and spiritual laws governing life and destiny of man, for the benefit of all mankind. He incidentally touched upon the metaphysical truths underlying man's moral life and spiritual goal.

Toleration and seeing unity in variety are the two marked characteristics of the highest Indian thought. The Gita representing the climax of Indian thought reflects these two characteristics abundantly. It breathes throughout an air of toleration and preaches a broad and comprehensive outlook on life. To cite a few examples :

> 'Whatever deity a devotee wishes to worship with faith, I make that faith of his steady. Endowed with that faith he worships that deity and obtains his desires, the fulfilment of those desires being decreed by Me alone.' (Chap. VII. 21. 22.) . . . 'Even those devotees of other gods, who worship them with faith, worship Me alone though they do so without knowing it.' (Chap. IX. 23.) . . . 'As men approach Me, so do I reach them.' (Chap. IV. 11.)

What the Lord means is that however gross or defective, a devotee's attitude towards Him may be, it has got a divine aspect and it is not so much the form of the deity that is worshipped that matters, as the fervour and faith with which the worship is performed. God has innumerable aspects and while no aspect is absolutely final, every aspect is equally true, thus the Gita reflects the wide catholicity of its outlook on God and religion.

There may be differences of opinion among scholars as to whether the Gita is mainly a work outlining a code of morals, only incidentally touching here and there upon some metaphysical doctrines, or whether it furnishes a complete system of metaphysics dealing with ultimate principles and their relation to pheno-

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menal facts. There may be differences of opinion as to whether the Gita is monistic or theistic in character; if it has a metaphysical view, whether it is a gospel of knowledge or devotion. But there is no room for two opinions with regard to what specific practical teaching Sri Krishna has given to Arjuna and through him to all mankind. Sri Krishna has left no ambiguity about it. The Gita begins with Arjuna's despondency and disinclination to fight. He thinks that it is a sin to fight with an army consisting of the venerable personages and his kith and kin, for the sake of a kingdom. Sri Krishna frees Arjuna from his despondency by his teaching. Arjuna is made to see the righteousness of the war he is going to fight. He is convinced that to fight a righteous war is his *svadharma* and not to fight is *adharma*. This significant change in Arjuna's attitude towards this war consequent on Sri Krishna's teaching, will lose all its importance if we do not regard action coupled with non-attachment to the results as the main teaching of the Gita. So Karma-yoga in the language of the Gita, is the specific message of the Gita.

Now let us understand what exactly is meant by Karma-yoga. The term '*karma*' normally means 'action', or 'work'. However, in the Gita, '*karma*' usually means those special duties and obligations which tradition and custom, prevalent at a time, imposed upon particular classes of society for securing and preserving the solidarity of society. In other words, Karma refers to *varna dharmas* (Chap. IV. 15 and XVIII. 41).

Similarly the term 'Yoga', though it has come to have several meanings, means 'applying oneself to' so far as the Karma-yoga is considered. So Karma-yoga may be understood to mean applying oneself to or devoting oneself to the discharge of one's duties and obligations, without any motive.

All voluntary deeds are done with a desire for some specific result. In the present case for instance, Arjuna is actuated by a desire for regaining his kingdom. Actions urged by desires for some particular results would not be Karma-yoga, for such actions would not be devotion to *karma* but to its result. Such actions bind one to the world. In Karma-yoga, the desire for result should be altogether dismissed from the mind, both during and after the act. Sri Krishna says to Arjuna "Your concern is solely with action, and never with its fruits". (Chap. II. 47). Therefore the term Karma-yoga signifies, as Sri Krishna repeatedly says in the Gita, doing a deed without the least thought for the result. No doubt, every action produces a result irrespective of whether result is desired or not. But the Karma-yogi is not concerned with it. His interest is over when the action is done and towards the result he is completely detached.

An important advantage of doing actions in the spirit of Karma-yoga is that one can do one's actions with complete equanimity. Sri Krishna explains yoga as 'balance of mind'. (Chap. II. 48). When an action is motivated by desire, anxiety as to whether the desired result is going to be obtained or not, will surely disturb the peace of mind of the doer. Again, when an action is inspired by self-interest, the doer is likely to lose sight of what is right and what is wrong. Even when he has chosen to do the right thing, undue eagerness for obtaining the result is likely to make him swerve from the path of rectitude, whereas a doer, if he is detached towards the result, is saved from all anxiety. There is nothing to divert him from the righteous path. This teaching that we ought to discharge our obligations, social or otherwise, with a sense of responsibility and at the same time banish from our minds all thought of obtaining personal benefit therefrom, and as a dedication to the Lord is what is meant by Karma-yoga.

The object of the Gita is to discover a golden mean between the two ideals: of action and of contemplation, preserving the merits of both. Karma-yoga is that golden mean in which the merits of both the ideals are happily combined. It advocates a life of activity with detachment as the guiding spirit and one's spiritual unfoldment as the goal of all one's activities. Thus it discards neither ideal, but combining the spirit of renunciation of the

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one and the activism of the other, it purifies and elevates man. This fusion of the two ideals in Karma-yoga gives due regard to social welfare on the one hand and on the other leads an individual to the fulfilment of his spiritual aspirations. Thus the Gita does neither ignore the society nor the individual. It does not advocate a life of inaction but instead recommends a life of intense action in which self is effaced in all its aspects.

Arjuna's was the path of action. He had come to the battlefield to fight as a Kshatriya, that he was, to regain his kingdom. But all on a sudden he resolved to renounce the world and withdraw from war and take to the path of renunciation. He forgot that real detachment was a pre-requisite for anybody who wanted to embrace the ideal of renunciation. Arjuna evidently did not possess this detachment and so he was ill-equipped for this ideal. Yet he thought of giving up the world. That his *vairagya* was not genuine is clear from the fact that it was not born of enlightenment but was a result of his infatuation for his kith and kin. Real *vairagya* is always a result of deep conviction that God alone is real and all else is unreal. Arjuna obviously did not have this conviction. His disinclination to fight had two reasons. The first reason is, that he loved his kith and kin more than his *svadharma*. He would rather give up *svadharma* and plunge the country into unrighteousness than fight and kill his own kith and kin. The second reason was his fear that he might not after all win the battle with Bhishma, Drona and many other notable warriors in the opposite camp. So what looked like *vairagya* on the surface was, at the bottom, only faint-heartedness, as Sri Krishna puts it. Arjuna had adopted an attitude of inaction not on ultimate grounds but on empirical grounds. Arjuna forgot that he had to fight not only for himself or for his family but also for his *dharma*; the interests of which were at stake. So Sri Krishna's teaching to Arjuna was that narrow selfish impulses were to be overcome and the way to do it was not by resorting to inaction but by discharging one's duties without any faint-heartedness and without any thought of personal gain. Arjuna was asked by Sri Krishna to shed his fear and attachment, both born of ignorance, and fight like a true Kshatriya.

It should not be understood that this teaching was meant only for Arjuna or people of his time. It holds good even to-day. Of course, people nowadays may not be so eager to give up social life and retire from the world as Arjuna wanted to do. But the danger comes from the other side. Today people are very much conscious of their rights. In their eagerness to claim and exercise them, they are very likely to forget or ignore their duties. Hence the need for the teaching of the Gita today is as great as ever. Its value has not diminished through passage of time and that is the mark of its greatness.

Sri Krishna has shown a great sense of propriety in selecting particularly the battlefield for the teaching of the Gita, for, nowhere else the self-interest of an individual is so completely subordinated to the general good as in a battlefield. The soldier may be quite sure of the legitimacy of the grounds on which he is fighting, but he is never sure about how the fighting is going to end. Even supposing that he is sure of a victory over his enemies, he is not sure whether he is going to survive the battle, to enjoy the fruits of victory. Yet, this uncertainty does not, in the least, minimise his responsibility as a soldier. He has to do his duty i.e., he has to fight with the best of faith and with the best of ability and at the same time should forget that he is to share the benefits of war. To say the same thing in the language of the Gita, the soldier should realise to the full that he is a doer though he should altogether forget that he would be an enjoyer. This, i.e., to work for no profit to oneself but yet to exert oneself to the utmost represents the highest form of self-sacrifice and the finest exhibition of this spirit is to be seen on a battlefield.

To be active is the nature of man and the Gita repeatedly says that no one can completely eschew work, for no one can go against one's own nature. The Gita appeals

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to men to properly canalise this tendency to work — so natural to mankind — so that it may not be utilised for selfish or material ends and thereby become the means of obscuring from them the higher end for which they are born.

The Gita calls upon all to perform their own duties or *svadharma* in the spirit of Karma yoga. According to it, one should never abandon one's specific duty or *svadharma* whether it is high or low (Chap. XVIII 47-48). It attaches little or no value to the intrinsic worth of a deed that is done by any person, so long as it is not his *svadharma.*

The word *svadharma* may bear a wide variety of meaning, but here in the Gita it chiefly means performing one's duties which are determined by one's position in society. Better is one's own *dharma,* though imperfectly carried out, than the *dharma* of another carried out perfectly (Chap. III. 35). Performance of one's *svadharma* helps one's spiritual growth and also the growth of one's inherent faculties, and by doing the *dharma* of others, abandoning one's own, one's growth gets stunted.

From what has been said before, it should not be understood that a Karmayogi has to work with no motive at all. For, no activity is possible without some motive or other. So, though the Karmayogi works without any attachment to results, his activities are not without any motive. According to the Gita there are two motives which inspire a Karmayogi to exert himself. They are (1) purification of the Self and (2) submission of the Self to God's Will i.e. Self-surrender. Here the question naturally arises, if a Karmayogi also works with a motive, then in what way are his actions detached? In answering this question, we should remember one thing: When Gita asks us to do our duties without any thought for the result, it does not expect us to do away with all motives as such, but it wants us to eliminate all worldly motives and to have the unfoldment of our spiritual nature, as the only motive of all our actions. Thus Karma yoga, though it appears to ignore the personal interest of the individual by insisting on the discharge of social obligations without thought for recompense, does not really do so, since it aims at the individual's spiritual progress.

According to the Gita, the goal of human life is liberation. But what is liberation? For a *jnani* or a *sadhaka* following the path of Knowledge, liberation is self-realization which means becoming one with Brahman or getting absorbed in the Absolute. For a *bhakta,* who follows the path of loving devotion to God, liberation consists in God-realisation which means reaching the presence of God and obtaining His vision. Whether liberation means a state of Self-realisation or God-realisation, its two characteristics are everlasting joy and 'peace that passeth understanding.' Practice of Karma Yoga is imperative both for the *jnani* and the *bhakta.* For a *jnani,* practice of Karma yoga is necessary to obtain self-purification which is a pre-requisite for the dawn of knowledge. For a *bhakta,* it is a necessary aid to develop an attitude of single-minded devotion and complete self-surrender which alone brings about the descent of God's grace and bestows the beatitude of God's vision. So whether we look upon the Gita as a gospel of knowledge or devotion, it is equally a gospel of action.

The Gita assigns an exalted position to work. According to it, at no stage of life work becomes superfluous and at no period of life work may be renounced. It expects a man to continue to work even when he has become perfect, there being nothing in the outer activity incompatible with his inner peace and poise. In the eyes of the Gita, mere inaction without proper realisation is as reprehensible as the performance of evil actions and hence is to be discarded.

A man of realisation may not have anything to gain for himself by doing work, but the society at large has everything to gain by his actions. So, with an eye for social welfare a *jivanmukta* does work. Janaka and Sri Krishna are two great examples among many of perfect men engaged in ceaseless work for the good of the world at large. So Karma

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yoga has reference both to a *sadhaka* and a *siddha* (perfect man). When referring to the former, it means that the *sadhaka* has to consciously wean himself away from all selfish impulses with a steady determination and when it refers to a *siddha,* it means that selfless action has become spontaneous with him. If in its first meaning, Karma yoga is the main theme of the Gita, in its second meaning, it is the ideal set before the *sadhaka.*

Lastly what has the Gita to say about the doctrine of Karma ? The Gita accepts the doctrine of Karma according to which one has to experience the result of one's actions. Some people seem to think that, if according to the doctrine of Karma everything that we do now is the inevitable consequence of what we did in the past, then all moral responsibility should cease for us and all self-effort to improve our being is useles. In considering this point, we have to remember that every deed that we do, not only produces pleasure or pain as its immediate result but also establishes in us a tendency to repeat the same deed in future. This tendency is called *samskara.* Good actions produce good *samskaras* and bad actions produce bad *samskaras.* Whenever favourable circumstances arise, these *samskaras* manifest themselves again.

It is in the nature of an action to give its immediate result, pleasure or pain, and nobody can prevent it from doing so. As regards the *samskaras,* we have got full power to control them and regulate them as they tend to express themselves in actions. While we have no control over our past actions, our present and future actions are controllable. We can make or mar our future by what we do in the present. There is nothing in the doctrine of Karma, that either eliminates moral responsibility or makes self-effort useless. It is certainly within our power to transform our nature by cultivating good *samskaras* and controlling the bad ones. So the doctrine of Karma, while it teaches resignation towards what may happen to us at present as a result of our past life, fills us with hope for the future. Though the past influences the present to a certain extent, the present is sufficiently free to build a glorious future.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND NARENDRANATH

"SUDAMA"

A strange drama was enacted in the latter half of the last century at the Kali Temple at Dakshineswar not far from Calcutta. It was a drama in real life and had far reaching results not only on the people of Bengal or India but on humanity as a whole. A village boy of nineteen summers, who even at an earlier age had discarded academic education as mere 'bread-winning' and taken to dramatic performance to depict the lives of Sri Ramachandra and Sri Krishna to educate his playmates in the proper way, was the hero of this drama. What he started in a mango grove of his native village, as an experiment perhaps, came on to the world stage, changed from mere acting into real living and instead of benefiting a handful of his playmates, conferred benediction on mankind as a whole. He was Gadadhar Chattopadhyaya who afterwards became famous as Sri Ramakrishna.

He had come along with his elder brother Ramkumar to Dakshineswar to witness the installation ceremony of Mother Kali in the newly built temple — the latter having accepted to perform the installation.

Ramkumar, though he came on invitation only to perform the installation, was prevailed upon by the proprietors of the temple to accept the post of the priest of the Divine Mother and live permanently there. Soon, events so shaped themselves that Gadadhar too with his artistic talents was very much liked by the

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proprietor of the temple. He was obliged to accept service first as an assistant and later, after the passing away of his brother, as the priest of Mother Kali. Gadadhar had his own convictions. He was convinced of the ephemerality of things worldly and had from his early boyhood known that the only thing to be aspired after in this world was God. And wherever he was, either in his native village or in Jhamapukur, a suburb of Calcutta, the one thing that was after his heart was worship of God.

Urged by a strong desire to know whether the Divine Mother was a conscious entity or a mere myth he converted his worship into a long fervent prayer and appeal to the Mother to reveal Herself. He entered the nearby woods at night and practised meditation in loneliness. His agony at not being blessed by the vision of the Mother increased beyond measure until at last driven to desperation he one day decided to put an end to his life. He snatched the sword that was lying in the corner of the Mother's shrine when all of a sudden he had a wonderful vision. An ocean of light infinite and boundless with its waves surging enveloped him and he fell down unconscious.

This first vision whetted, as it were, his passion to have the continuous and immediate presence of the Divine Mother. He performed his sadhanas with redoubled vigour. So passionate was his longing for the Mother that he writhed in pain and cried loudly praying for Her vision until at last he had not only the continuous vision of the Mother, but he actually conversed with Her in every matter. She was the only consolation in his distress. His worship lost all formality. His divine ecstasies did not allow him to be regular in his worship. Mathuranath, the proprietor of the temple therefore appointed Sri Ramakrishna's nephew as the priest. But the former had grown so enamoured of the Master's divine presence and his illimitable grace on Mathuranath's family that he requested him to continue to live in the temple precincts.

Then came to him a host of competent teachers of some sect or other. Under them he went through all forms of *sadhana* and all the modes of approach to the Godhead as stated in the Vaishnava and other Hindu scriptures, practised Islam, and even went through the practices of Advaita Vedanta. In each instance within a short time he reached the pinnacle of realisation enunciated in the scriptures of the different sects and religions. He had a vision of Christ too. After all these experiences he was sure that God was one but the paths of approach were different. The strife between sect and sect that was noticed in the world was injurious to religious life itself. He had therefore a message to the world.

He had dived deep into the ocean of Reality and had collected by his mighty efforts of twelve long years a vast treasure of jewels. His next thought was to whom should he bequeath this vast treasure? Or shall it again be lost in the womb of time! He felt anxious and prayed to the Divine Mother. She showed him that devotees would come. But how could he wait? All around him he saw only the worldly-minded. In anguish he would go to the terrace of the building nearby at the time of evening vesper service in the temples and loudly call out to them.

The devotees pure and earnest started to come not long after this and from among them he chose some young, pure and unsophisticated souls to carry the banner of his message. Narendranath, a lad of 19 was one of them. What a meeting it was! At the very first sight of Narendranath a love unselfish, unearthly and incomparable welled up in Sri Ramakrishna's heart. Wonderful was the manifestation of that love; never did a mother love her child so much, never did a wife love her husband so dearly, never did a miser love his wealth so passionately as Sri Ramakrishna loved Narendra. Sri Ramakrishna's attention to Narendra that day bordered almost on worship, his entreaties to Narendra to visit him again and alone, his addressing him as the Rishi, Nara, companion of Narayana and

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finally feeding him with sweets with his own hands showed the depth of that love and regard he had for him.

Narendranath was a college boy well-versed in Western philosophy and imbued with the rationalistic approach whereas Sri Ramakrishna represented all that was ancient, and all that was Eastern.

The two souls, one representing the ancient culture and the other representing the modern thought, met like two streams. It was an eventful meeting, eventful in the sense it fused both these systems of thought, the Oriental and the Occidental, the religious with the scientific, the emotional with the logical. It was eventful as this meeting formed the beginning of that slow transformation of an agnostic and sceptic Narendranath into the champion of the Eternal Religion, into the towering personality, Swami Vivekananda. It was eventful inasmuch as it formed the nucleus for broadcasting the message of the Master. Sri Ramakrishna found Narendra capable of disseminating his message to the world.

Sri Ramakrishna found Narendranath a fit recipient for even the highest state in spiritual life, viz. Nirvikalpa Samadhi. At the very beginning of their contact, Sri Ramakrishna wanted to bestow upon him that state but Naren was not prepared for the onrush of that power and in panic he had cried out, 'What are you doing to me? I have got my father and mother at home.' He felt as if the whole world was disappearing, his individuality was getting merged into the Superconscious never to return to this plane again. Sri Ramakrishna was puzzled. Had the Mother failed him or was he wrong in estimating Narendra's antecedents? But soon he collected himself and said, 'All right, let it now wait'. No sooner did Sri Ramakrishna utter these words than Narendranath was his normal self again.

When Narendra came for the third time to visit the Master fully determined not to be overwhelmed by the Master's power, the Master too had determined to know from Narendra himself about his antecedents. As they were talking Sri Ramakrishna just touched Narendra on his chest which completely put him under a spell, as it were, and during this period Sri Ramakrishna plied him with many questions regarding his past and his future, to which Narendra, who was completely lost to outer consciousness, seemed to have given replies that tallied with the visions Sri Ramakrishna had had of him before his coming. It was after this thorough examination of the fitness of the disciple did the Master begin to train up Narendranath for spreading his message.

Having come to know the inner propensities of Narendranath, Sri Ramakrishna wanted to train him according to those tendencies. He would talk about Advaita whenever the latter happened to be at Dakshineswar. He would ask Naren to read to him from the Advaitic treatises such as the *Ashtavakra Samhita*. Naren objected to this and said that to believe in such texts which maintained that everything was God was blasphemy. He did not fail to speak disparagingly of the Rishis who wrote them. Sri Ramakrishna with infinite patience put up with this criticism but humoured Narendra to read the books to him just for his sake.

Narendra would read but his rational thinking did not permit him to believe in what was expressed in those books. One day, however, as Narendra was condemning the writers of these Vedantic treatises the Master in a state of divine inebriation came towards him and touched him. The touch had a magic effect, Narendra saw that whatever existed was really Consciousness and nothing but that. He wanted to see how long this experience lasted, whether it was the Master's own projection to convince him of the statements or whether that was the real state of affairs. The experience lasted for many days, during which time he would see everything as Brahman, as Consciousness; the plate, the food, the server and himself, he saw were all made of that one substance. While going to college he saw vehicles coming but did not feel any urge to move away from them, for he saw the car-

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riages, the horses, the drivers and himself were made of the same substance, Consciousness. Having experienced such a state how could he disbelieve. Thus was wiped out for ever an unbelief with a single touch which perhaps thousands of arguments and books by the myriads would not have been able to do. This is the uniqueness of Sri Ramakrishna ; he did not allow the disciple to grope in the dark for long but brought home to him the truths in sudden flashes and determined effort.

The relation between Sri Ramakrishna and Narendranath was something incomprehensible. If Narendranath failed to visit him for any length of time he would send him word and still if he did not turn up he would himself go to Calcutta and hound him out. Sri Ramakrishna literally pined for his presence. For his sake Sri Ramakrishna was ready to suffer even humiliation. Once when Narendranath had not come for a long time, he went to Calcutta and learning that Narendra had gone to the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, Sri Ramakrishna uninvited repaired there. But the Brahmo devotees did not accord to him even the common courtesy offered to a casual visitor. On the other hand when the congregation grew curious to see the Master some of the Brahmo devotees put out the lights in order to break up the assembly. Narendra felt immensely mortified at this treatment meted out to the Master. He brought him silently by the back door of the Samaj and escorted him to Dakshineswar, taking him to task at the same time for his curious behaviour. But Sri Ramakrishna was unperturbed, either by the humiliation or by the scolding of Narendranath. He was supremely satisfied at having Narendra at his side.

On another occasion Narendra utterly disgusted with the ways of the world was secretly getting ready to renounce it. But on the day he had fixed to commence his itineracy the Master had come to Calcutta. Narendra came to have a last look at the Master. Wonderful was Sri Ramakrishna's behaviour that day. In spite of all the excuses offered by Narendranath, the Master took him to Dakshineswar and what passed between them afterwards can best be described in the words of Narendranath himself :

> 'After reaching Dakshineswar I sat with others in his room for sometime, when the Master went into Bhavasamadhi. In a moment he came suddenly to me and taking my hand in his began singing as tears flowed :
>
> "I am afraid to speak, and am equally afraid not to speak.
> The doubt rises in my mind, Lest I should lose you."
>
> I long kept back the surge of the strong emotions of my mind but could not any more check their force. My breast too was flooded with tears like that of the Master. I was quite sure that the Master knew everything. All others were astonished to see that behaviour of ours. . . . Afterwards, sending away all others, he called me to him at night and said, "I know you have come to the world for Mother's work, you can never live a worldly life. But remain in your family for my sake as long as I live." Saying so, the Master immediately began to shed tears again and his voice became choked with emotion.'

And how did Narendranath respond to the Master's love! He became his bond slave. Even when the Master showed intense neglect he repaired to see him as often as he used to do. Later at Cossipore when the Master was ill, it was he who organised the service part of the treatment of the Master. Under his guidance the young devotees gave up all thoughts of hearth, home and studies and engaged in the Master's service.

These are but a few of the innumerable instances of the sweet relationship that existed between Sri Ramakrishna and Narendranath. Swami Saradananda in his monumental work the *Lila Prasanga** in Bengali has beautifully described this wonderful relation of the Master and the Disciple. By their providential meeting the world has been blessed with a universal message of harmony of religions and the ancient truth of the Vedas, 'Truth is one sages call it differently' has been scientifically and experimentally proved and established. Let us therefore profit from their experience and make our lives blessed.

* The English translation of this work is *Sri Ramakrishna, The Great Master.*

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INDIA'S CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATION—IV

V. N. SHARMA

Curricula of studies

In the earlier centuries of Indian education, all branches of knowledge were taken up either by the forest schools or by ordinary institutions located in the villages and towns. A pupil who begins his studies at the age of seven or later, according to the traditional formalities, devotes nearly seven to eight years gaining a good elementary knowledge in all subjects as required by the traditional scheme of education. It is said that a normal child who begins his studies at the age of seven could finish this course in his fourteenth year. Then he chooses such subjects as those for which he has a special aptitude and interest and devotes as many years as he can in mastering them. By the time he completes the traditional studentship he is in a position to command a good knowledge in many subjects.

Many of the *Upanishadic* and *Brāhmana* Texts of the Vedas have preserved for us some information on this subject. When Narada approaches the teacher Sanatkumara for instruction, the latter asks him to relate what he had already known to enable him to lead him to 'What is beyond'. Narada replies :

'I have read *Rigveda*, the *Yajurveda*, the *Sama Veda*, the *Atharva Veda*, the *Itihāsa* (books that allude to anecdotes and expressions as referred to in the Vedic literature in a narrative form), *Purāna* (books that narrate historical incidents in mythical form), Grammar (*Vyākarana*), Rituals (*Pitryāgam*), the Science of Numbers (*Rāsi* — now known as Arithmetic and Algebra), Physics (*Daiva*), Chronology (*Nidhi* or the science which regulates the divisions of time into years, seasons, months, days, etc.), Logic (*Vākovākya*), Polity and Economics (*Ekāyanam*), Technology (*Deva Vidya*), Sciences which cognate the Vedas (articulation, ceremonials, prosody, etc.), the science of spirits (*Bhūta Vidya*), Military Arts (*Kśatra Vidya*), Astronomy (*Nakśatra Vidya*), the science of Antidotes (*Sarpa Vidya*) and Fine Arts (*Devajana Vidya*).' (*Chand. Up.* VII. 1. 1-3.) This list we can more or less take as the one that the ancient teachers followed in their scheme of studies for all pupils. The same list of studies we find not only in the Vedic but in the later periods as well. As time passed on, a number of divisions and subdivisions of the usual traditional subjects were added to their main order as new ones so that at a later period the total number of subjects reached to 64. It is said, that, he alone who could master them in a regular and systematic order could call himself, a scholar and a learned man (Kalidasa). But in spite of their vast number, the main subjects remained the same, retaining the ancient sources of knowledge without any change.

The teachers considered the subjects narrated by Narada as mere preliminaries to the study of higher subjects : subjects which comprehend the Incomprehensible One (*Parā*). Many of the *Brāhmana* texts of the Vedas give us some more idea of the nature of these curricula, showing the different stages either a boy or a girl will have to pass through to master the subjects mentioned by Narada.

It is taken for granted — and it had been a traditional custom in the system of Indian Education — that a boy, whether he happens to study under his parents or with a teacher in the forest school or in an ordinary school of his own locality, begins his studies with the Veda proper. The Vedic Study in the preliminary stages will not be of a high standard as would be required of a mature pupil. He is made to understand the six *angās* that would introduce him into the mysteries of the Vedic Lore. They are : *sikśā*, *vyākarana*, *chandas*, *nirukta*, *jyothiśa* and *kalpa*.

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Under *sikśā*, come phonology and pronunciation of letters according to voice (*swara*), time (*kāla*), vocal position (*sthāna*), exercises of the muscles involved in this connection (*prayatna*), origins of all sounds (*anupradāna* and *savana*), etc. A thorough training in *sikśā* is demanded in all schools. I-Tsing in his observations on the curricula of studies under the Buddhist educational system gives us some detailed information of the method adopted in his time in the study of this subject. This subject is taught to all, as a preliminary course to the study of grammar and the subject in I-Tsing's time was known as *siddhi rastu* (or good luck). There seems to be a regular text on different exercises which beginners had to practise and a boy begins to learn his alphabet from this book.

> 'This text contains 49 letters and their different combinations arranged in 18 sections. There are 10,000 syllables which every one must learn by heart. Until a boy has acquainted himself thoroughly with all the intricacies of this subject he is not introduced to the other subjects and it is said that children learn this from a little book used in that connection when they are six years old and finish it in six months.' (I-Tsing, p. 105)

Then they begin *vyākarana*, which is translated by the oriental scholars as grammar but this word does not bring the real spirit of the Sanskrit word. It is the philosophy of the language and also the science of philology. The subject is vast and endless and to master it thoroughly one will have to spend two or three decades. A later writer Panini has preserved for us the whole subject in the traditional *Sutra* (Aphorisms) form and many commentaries have been written by his successors to bring home the complications of the rules in a perspicuous form. The pupils,

> 'learn the sutra when they are eight years old and can repeat it in six months' time. Then they go into details by studying a book on *dhātus* — the roots of verbs. Then comes another book on the *khilas* or on cases and conjugations and other forms of words which are derived from the roots and suffixes. Then is taken up the *Vritti Sutra*, a commentary on the foregoing lessons. Boys of 15 begin to study this commentary and master it in five years.' (I-Tsing, pp. 105-125)

In other words it is a very long course and obligatory in all stages of a boy's education.

The Buddhist schools have given a prominent place, like their predecessors to the study of grammar. Along with grammar boys are taught selected verses from the religious texts and I-Tsing gives us some reasons why the Buddhist schools have adopted this method; a method which was in great practice in the Vedic times as well.

> 'There are six reasons for this. Firstly, these hymns enable us to know the great and profound virtues of Lord Buddha. Secondly, they show us how to compose verses. Thirdly, they ensure purity of language. Fourthly, the chest is expanded in singing them. Fifthly, by reciting them nervousness in an assembly is overcome. Sixthly, by their use life is prolonged, and we are protected from disease. After one is able to recite them, then one proceeds to learn other books.' (I-Tsing. pp. 125-155)

The study of grammar is only preliminary to the study of higher subjects. Without it

> 'the students could not be able to learn composition in prose and poetry and devote themselves to the study of other subjects which demand a good knowledge of grammar, viz. the study of logic and metaphysics at a later stage. (I-Tsing, p. 155)

Chandas in the modern sense touches the sphere of Prosody and Rhetoric. A study of this subject is taken up along with grammar. In the fourth *angā* a boy has to master *nirukta* or glossorial terms referred to in the Vedic texts and many words that cannot be defined under ordinary grammatical formulae come in this category.

Jyotiśa gives all possible information on the measuring of time, the study of the movements of the planets and the stars; in other words the subject includes astronomy, astrology, calculation, etc. *Kalpa* explains the different ritual codes one has to observe in the Vedic ceremonies and sacrifices. It is said that it would take at least six to seven years to have a good knowledge of these six *angās* and a boy usually completes them in their preliminary form before he reaches his fifteenth year and then alone takes up other subjects.

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Either at this stage or at a later stage he is introduced to the study of the four *upa angās*: the elementary study of different philosophical systems — *Mimāmsa* and *Nyāya*, the *Purāna* and the *Smriti*. The philosophical systems of *Nyāya* and *Mimāmsa* expound and interpret the different ceremonies and other usages mentioned in the Vedic Texts and bring home to the student the philosophical principles behind all rituals.

Mimāmsa and *Nyāya* are vast subjects and books that deal with them are innumerable. A boy, if he so desires, could specialize in them at a later date but at this stage he is only required to understand their main ideas and principles. *Purānas* relate to ancient historical references. *Smriti* describes the social, economic and moral aspects of the human society. Then come under this curricula what are traditionally called *Upavedas*, viz. *Ayurveda, Arthasāstra, Dhanurveda* and *Gandharva Veda*. A thorough study of these four branches are demanded from all students before they complete their studentship and enter into the wider world.

Ayurveda is a vast branch of study and includes *Aktuti* (Anatomy and Physiology) and *Bheti* (Therapeutics and Medicine). Till the Buddhist period there were no specialized medical studies and as such a student of the pre-Buddhist period, had to know the secrets of medicine as a part of his Vedic studies. He was expected to have some practical experience both in medicine and surgery. As time passed on, and a new class of physicians and surgeons came into existence, detailed study of *Ayurveda* was taken away from the hands of Vedic teachers. Either new schools were opened for its study or special teachers of the medical classes were entrusted with the study of the subject. In the Buddhist period we find a detailed bifurcation of this subject from the ordinary one. Many colleges were opened under the patronage of the Buddhist monasteries for its intense study. The classical authorities on medicine, Charaka and Susruta lived and wrote their books in these times.

Arthaśāstra deals with the actions and administrations of Kings in accordance with the dictates of the Vedic injunctions; they also touch the economic aspect of the human society; in other words, *arthaśāstra* is politics and economics. A study of this subject was very popular in all places in the Vedic and post-Vedic periods. Ramayana and Mahabharata enjoin a study of the subject on all. (*Mahabharata-Sabhaparva; Ramayana-Ayodhyakanda*). However, systematic books on this vast subject began to be written only at a later date. The first book preserved for us, was edited by Kautilya, the teacher and Prime Minister of the Emperor Chandra Gupta as early as 326 B.C. According to Kautilya, this subject was to be taught not only to the children of the royal families and government servants — present or prospective — but to all classes who call themselves cultured and refined (Kautilya: *Artha Śâstra*).

Dhanurveda (otherwise known as *Śastra Vidya*) deals mostly with military tactics and strategy; thorough knowledge of this subject in all its branches is demanded from all pupils of the military caste (*Kśatriya*) as also from students of other classes who would enter into government services at a later stage either as ministers or as military officers. This subject was also taught to all students of the Vedic Studies. The art of archery, use of all kinds of weapons, art of wrestling (*malla*), all possible tactics and strategies one will have to adopt in times of peace and war, fall under this subject. A study of the characteristics and management of elephants (*Gaja śâstra*), of horses (*Aśwa śâstra*), and other animals employed in the military departments are included in it.

Under *Gandharva Veda* come the fine arts. Special mention among them is to be made of *nritya* (dancing), *gita* (song), *vâdya* (use of different musical instruments). The subject is all-comprehensive as the science of Music, (*sangita śâstra*), the science of dramaturgy and dancing (*nâtya śâstra*), the science of aesthetics, all come under it.

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The list is not complete since from time to time teachers introduced many other subjects if they found it necessary to bring about a wider outlook and better understanding in all spheres of knowledge.

When a pupil was ready he was introduced to the philosophical thought, not only of his land but also of other nations and races with whom India came into contact. Even *nâstika* and Yavana doctrines were not excluded. The *nâstika* advocates the origin of all things from nature, not from God, and the non-reliability of revelation. Yavana doctrine recognizes God as the creator of the Universe and considers virtues and vices as having moral and not religious basis (*Śukra Niti*, IV. 3).

Among other subjects of interest we find, *Deshabhaśa*, study of languages and *Desi Dharma*—a study of the characteristics of men and women of other nations and races, a study of minerals, plants and animals is also included. We see also some subjects peculiar to the non-Aryan tribes introduced in the traditional scheme of studies viz., *sarpa vidya* (science of antidotes), *asura vidya* (mystical lore of the barbarians), *piśacha vidya* (studies of the culture of devils).

We see further a mention made of Tantric Philosophy along with study of Yoga, Sâmkhya and Vaiśeśika — a special feature which is found introduced in the Buddhist period. Along with the above, *śilpa śâstra* (sculpture and architecture) played a great part in the educational curriculum. The subject is taught, not for its utilitarian value but from its philosophical aspect and to present the highest philosophical ideals through symbolism. As a result a study of Iconography was very popular in the middle ages and in the later period of Indian History. The great teachers of the middle ages wrote many treatises on the subject and thus gave this time-honoured art a prominent place by attributing a philosophical basis for its study. The highest temple architecture was produced during the middle ages and all classes of people, scholars and ordinary craftsmen took a great interest in this study.

Since the coming of the Muhammadans on the Indian scene, there came about a great change in the traditional studies of old. In temperament, in outlook, Muhammadans were quite different from the Indian type and hence there was a conflict between the two people for a number of centuries. Many prominent educational institutions had to disappear entirely on account of the militaristic attitude of the ruling classes in the matter of culture and education. But in the reign of Akbar, a new renaissance of Indian culture began. Akbar was cosmopolitan in his views and broad in his attitude towards the educational life of India and encouraged scholars and learned to follow their own traditional methods in their educational plans. Thus started a new revival in the history of Indian education. But Persian methods of studies influenced a great deal the scheme of Indian studies. Unlike the olden days, only such studies that would be of immediate use, were taken up and prominent place was given to such subjects alone in schools and colleges of the day, even though here and there, the old ones carried on their traditional studies.

Among other subjects, Etymology, Syntax, Rhetoric and Logic were popular in all schools during the first four years' course. At a later stage courses on Literature, Jurisprudence, Natural Philosophy, Mathematics and Polity were introduced into the higher classes lasting from three to five years.

The State controlled the curricula of studies, unlike in the olden days and regulated different branches of studies deputing officers of the State to visit educational institutions from time to time.

During the Muslim rule, a study of art in its different phases took a major place, even though a divided allegiance was given to philosophy and science.

Indian education has also adopted a good deal from the Muhammadan system, taking all things best either from Persian or Arabic, in its traditional scheme of studies.

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CAN THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN SUBSTANCE AND QUALITIES BE MAINTAINED ?

K. R. VENKATASUBRAMANIAN

Antiquity of the Concept of Substance

The concept of substance is quite ancient. It has stimulated the interests of many philosophers right since the Age of the Greeks ; and even now it continues to hold an important place among other problems of philosophy.

For example, we have the Milesian conception of the world-substance which combines in itself the two elements : (1) a substance remaining like itself, and (2) an independent or self-subsistent changeability. But as this conception looked somewhat crude, Xenophanes and Heraclitus modified it by isolating the one element from the other. The former emphasized the first element, namely the self-subsistent and immutable element, whereas the latter laid stress on the element of mutability and changeability. However, it must be borne in mind that, though Heraclitus insisted upon the mutability and changeability, he did not deny the existence of a permanent substance ; he definitely recognized a permanent reality which he called by different names, such as, the rhythm of events, destiny, order, or the reason of the world.

Next, we come to Aristotle's conception of substances which are divided into (1) individual things as determined in conception, and (2) the species which constitute the essence of individual things. If we, then, proceed towards Stoic philosophy, we find that matter assumes the place of a substance which is devoid of any properties. The inherent qualities are regarded by them as kinds of matter (atmospheric currents) which are commingled with it.

If we now turn our attention to Indian philosophy, we find that there, too, the concept of substance has occupied the minds of ancient philosophers. To cite only one example, I shall quote the notion of substance as expressed in the Jaina philosophy from Dr. Radhakrishnan's book, *Indian Philosophy* — Vol. I.

'The Jains do not hold,' he says, 'that being is permanent without becoming change and end.' Thus, according to the Jaina philosophy 'Substance is that which persists in and throughout its own qualities and modifications. . . . It is a dynamic reality, an identity which changes.' Radhakrishnan quotes from Haribhadra's *Saddarsanasamuchhaya* wherein substance is defined as *anantadharmâtmakam*, which he translates as : 'Substance is one, the inherent essence of all things, manifests itself through diverse forms, has the three characteristics of creation, destruction and staying, and may be described by opposites.'

The Jaina concept of substance and qualities require a separate study. I have referred to it here solely with a view to elucidating the antiquity of the concept of substance, both in occidental and oriental philosophies. As the purpose here is not to give a full historical analysis of the problem, but to examine the possible meanings of it, let us proceed with this enquiry now.

A Peep into the Possible Meanings of Substance

The term, substance, has been defined in various ways. The common meanings given in the *Chamber's Twentieth Century Dictionary* are :

(1) That in which qualities or attributes exist, the existence to which qualities belong,

(2) That which constitutes anything what it is,

(3) The principal part,

(4) Gist, subject-matter, etc.,

(5) Kind of matter especially one of definite chemical nature,

(6) (Shakesperian) : Amount, wealth, solid, worth, etc.

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Out of these six meanings, the last four are not of much significance from the metaphysical point of view ; and the third has an epistemological significance in so far as it involves a relationship between the Part and the Whole or Universal and Particular. So, the first two meanings alone are consistent with the title of this article.

(1) A substance is that in which qualities or attributes exist or the existence to which qualities belong. If we take this meaning, we find that qualities or attributes have no existence apart from a substance since they properly belong to it ; a substance is what it is, an independent entity, in which qualities inhere, but whose nature is not well-defined. This loss, however is made up by the second meaning.

(2) A substance is that which constitutes anything what it is. In this sense, a substance is the essence of all things. If anything is what it is, it is because of the substance ; it is the substratum of all things. But, here, a question may be raised : what is it that constitutes or helps to make a substance, apart from all material objects and their qualities ?

The Pure Substance is Unknowable

The answer is that a pure substance is unknowable. What we perceive by our senses is not the real substance since our sensations are not real and as human perception has its own limitations. We perceive only the qualities such as sound, touch, form, taste and smell (*sabda*, *sparsa*, *rupa*, *rasa* and *gandha*). We can conceive a pure substance only in imagination and on the basis of our experience of material objects. Hence, the objects such as a table, a chair, a book, etc. are not real substances ; they are merely nomenclatures, names and forms, framed for our convenience — *nama rupa*, in the Vedantic sense. Nobody can describe the pure substance underlying the phenomenal objects for the obvious reason that the noumena is not the phenomena.

We know that the table is made of wood. For this reason, can we say that the wood is the substance of the table ? If so, a further question may be put : what is the substance of wood ? And so on, the question may be repeated *ad infinitum*. Similarly, a book consists of a number of pages. On this account can we say that pages constitute a book ? If not, can we identify the contents with a book ? No doubt, contents are more valuable in a book than the number of pages, but even the contents cannot be treated as the essence or substance of a book. The essence, we may say, are the thoughts of the individual authors.

Thus, we find that the pure substance transcends human understanding. It is unknowable. So, Hume is entirely correct when he says that ' nature has kept us at a great distance from all her secrets, and has afforded us only the knowledge of a few superficial qualities of objects ; while she conceals from us those powers and principles on which the influence of those objects entirely depend '. Hume, elsewhere, says that ' substance is the unknown indescribable support of the known contents of ideas. . . . '

The unknowability of the pure substance is acknowledged also by Locke. He argues :

> ' If any one will examine himself concerning his notion of pure substance in general, he will find he has no other idea of it at all, but only a supposition, of he knows not what support, of such qualities which are capable of producing simple ideas in us ; which qualities are commonly called ' accidents '. If any one should be asked, " What is the subject wherein colour or weight inheres ? " he would have nothing to say but, ' The solid extended parts '. And if he were demanded, " What is that solidity and extension inhere in," he would not be in a much better position than the Indian who, saying that the world was supported by a great elephant, was asked, what the elephant rested on, to which his answer was, " A great tortoise " ; but being again pressed to know what gave support to the broad-backed tortoise, replied, — something he knew not what.'

In the last part of the quotation given above, Locke seems to have a fantastic opinion about the Indian philosophy as his remarks about the Indians are rather sarcastic. So it is

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necessary to bear in mind that the unknowability of the pure substance avowedly acknowledged by Locke strikes at the same point which the Vedantist philosophers in India also maintain. They say that Brahman is beyond thought, word and deed (*avangmanasagocharam*).

Now let us examine, in some detail, the views of Locke, Berkeley and Hume regarding the concept of substance and attributes.*

Locke, Berkeley and Hume — their ideas about substance and qualities

Locke : Locke and Hume agree in so far as that we perceive only the qualities or impressions but their approaches are different. Hume is not able to define impressions which, he says, we can conceive only as more lively perceptions. Though he is able to arrange impressions in a pyramidical order giving an elevated position to the impressions in their order of greater liveliness, he has not attempted to classify them as Locke did with his qualities.

Locke divides the qualities into primary and secondary. He includes solidity, extension, figure, motion or rest, and number among primary qualities ; and colour, sounds, tastes, etc. among secondary qualities. Primary qualities are those which are

> 'utterly inseparable from the body, in what state soever it be ; and such as, "in all the alterations and changes it suffers, all the force can be used upon it, it consequently keeps ; and such as sense constantly finds every particle of matter which has bulk enough to be perceived and the mind finds inseparable from every particle of matter, though less than to make itself singly be perceived by our senses."'

The primary qualities, according to Locke, produce simple ideas in us. And simple ideas are those which are uncompounded appearances and which the mind can neither make nor destroy.

From this passage, we see that Locke's primary qualities inhere in the substance so that the rigid demarcation of them as distinct entities is not of much significance. According to his conception, the distinction between substance and primary qualities cannot be maintained, as solidity, extension, etc. are part and parcel of the substance.

Locke maintains that

> 'the idea we have, to which we give the general name substance, being nothing but the supposed, but unknown, support of the qualities we find existing, which we imagine cannot subsist *sine re substante* "without something to support them," we call that support substantia ; which, according to the true import of the word, is, in plain English, standing under or upholding.'

This position of Locke clearly indicates that we can infer the idea of substance only from the idea of the qualities ; and, as such, what we perceive are the qualities and not the substance which is the support of all corporeal bodies. Thus, Locke paves the way for Berkeley who maintains that what we see through qualities is not a corporeal entity, or the pure substance which, according to him, must be incorporeal. He categorically asserts that 'there is not any other substance than spirit.'

Berkeley : Berkeley postulates the conception of Mind for matter. He says that 'the very notion of what is called Matter or corporeal substance involves a contradiction in it. For, extension, figure, and motion are only ideas existing in the mind.' He denies that objects have existence, natural or real, apart from their being perceived. He says :

> 'It is indeed an opinion strangely prevailing amongst men, that houses, mountains, rivers, and in a word all sensible objects, have an existence, natural or real, distinct from their being perceived by the understanding.'

'If we thoroughly examine this tenet,' he further maintains, 'it will, perhaps, be found at bottom to depend on the doctrine of abstract ideas.'

* In the following exposition, I have extensively referred to the book : *Modern Classical Philosophers* by B. Rand.

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Berkeley's position is weak in so far as he is not very definite about his philosophy of Mind or Spirit. Though he maintains that there are no corporeal substances, he does not deny the reality of ideas which, according to him, are the things. He says that there is only a spiritual substance whose *esse est percipi*. Even if individual minds fail to perceive it, it exists because the spirit perceives it. His position is clear from the following passages.

> 'Ideas imprinted on the senses are real things, or do really exist: this we do not deny, but we deny they can subsist without the minds which perceive them, or that they are resemblances of any arch types existing without the mind; since the very beginning of sensation or idea consists in being perceived, and an idea can be like nothing but an idea.'

He again says that the objects perceived by sense are nothing but combinations of sensible qualities like extension, motion, etc. and consequently cannot subsist by themselves.

In so far as Berkeley says that sensible qualities do not constitute the substance, he is correct. But, is it necessary that we should perceive the objects or ideas so that they may be called real things? Or, can we not say that there is something called Substance even if nobody perceives it; if the 'Spirit' also does not perceive it? These questions cannot be answered satisfactorily by Berkeley if he does not give up his notion of *esse est percipi*. We cannot also justify his opinion by identifying 'perception' with 'conception' because these two terms have totally different psychological significance.

Berkeley, therefore, is wrong when he says that 'the unthinking beings perceived by sense have no existence distinct from being perceived, and cannot therefore exist in any other substance than spirits which act and think and perceive them.'

As against this view, I like to maintain that even unthinking beings or objects exist as Being — or better still, in Being — and that without Being there is no believing. So *esse* is not *percipi*, but *percipi* is *esse*; that is to say, the truth of Reality or Existence does not depend upon or presuppose our perception; nor is it identical with perception; but our perception or realization is based upon Reality. Reality is the Ground on which everything stands.

This Being or Existence, again, is not a subject which experiences an object; nor is it an object depending for its existence on the mercy of individual experience; it is also not an abstract idea. We cannot define what it is, but can only say what it is not. All schools of philosophy will have to reach this point at the end.

Berkeley, in denying corporeal substances and in substituting for them an incorporeal substance (a spiritual substance), has not gone any farther in the metaphysical notion of substance and qualities than Locke. For, his reasons for substituting an incorporeal substance for a corporeal one are not sound. His one reason is:

> 'All the unthinking objects of the mind agree in that they are entirely passive, and their existence consists only in being perceived; whereas a soul or spirit is an active being, whose existence consists, not in being perceived but in perceiving ideas and thinking.'

It has been scientifically proved by Eddington and others that there is no inert substance. Even the inactive substances like table, chair, etc. are not passive as Berkeley assumes because modern scientists clearly avow that meticulous observation has revealed to them a lively dance of atoms and molecules in those objects.

In his philosophy, Berkeley proves himself to be a Subjective Idealist. He believes in the existence of only an experiencing subject and, in doing so, he cannot avoid the dualism of Mind and Matter.

From the exposition given above, it is clear that Berkeley believes neither in substances nor in qualities as separate entities; nor in their co-existence. His main thesis is: a substance is a substance only so far as they

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are *perceived,* and their existence is identical with being perceived. In maintaining this thesis, Berkeley contradicts himself though he attributes the same blame to those who believe in the existence of Matter. Hume, therefore, naturally, takes advantage of this weakness of Berkeley and tries to rectify it in his philosophy of scepticism.

Hume : Hume's scepticism cannot, as is usually being done, be regarded as a negative approach to the absolute denial of everything. His method is quite novel and critical. So Hume's philosophy of scepticism must be interpreted as a critical philosophy and not as a Doubting Philosophy. Windelband is, thus, quite right when he says that,

> 'If we characterise this standpoint as Positivism, in accordance with the terminology of our century, we may say that its systematic basis was established by Hume.'

According to Hume, there is no idea of substance at all. All that exists is only a collection of particular qualities which we perceive. Even mankind he reduces to a bundle or collection of different perceptions.

> 'The idea of substance must be derived from an impression of reflection, if it really exists. But the impressions of reflection resolve themselves into our passions and emotions ; none of which can possibly represent a substance. We have therefore no idea of substance.'

Let us now recapitulate in a nut-shell what, according to us, are the ideas maintained by Locke, Berkeley, and Hume.

Recapitulation of the Ideas of Locke, Berkeley and Hume

According to Locke, there are only corporeal substances which, of course, are unknowable apart from the primary qualities, extension, solidity, figure, motion or rest, and number, which constitute the nature of substance. For Berkeley, there are no corporeal substances but only a spiritual substance which is the subject of experience of all real things which (real things), however, exist as and in being perceived by the mind, because they are passive ; whereas spirit, being active, can exist as a percipient unlike the things of the world. He denies the existence of primary qualities which Locke maintains. He says that there is no difference between primary qualities and other sensible qualities because neither of them can exist independently of a perceiving Mind. Thus, Berkeley not only denies corporeal substances but also the attributes which inhere in substances. In their stead, he postulates a spiritual substance and thus jumps from metaphysics to a sort of Christian theology. Herein the way is paved for Hume who exploits Berkeley's weak points. He denies the existence of substance as a whole and reduces everything perceivable to qualities or impressions whose connection we see is due to association by custom. Thus, even qualities or impressions possess only subsidiary value and not a permanent value or reality.

Concluding Opinions

After all these analyses, what is the logical conclusion one arrives at with regard to the concept of substance and qualities ? Do they possess any metaphysical value so that they can be called real ? Or, are they unreal ? These questions will have to be answered now if we do not wish to break our journey in the middle. So I conclude as follows :

(1) Reality is the Substance behind all phenomena. Undoubtedly, both the philosopher and a common man will admit that there is some Reality or Truth behind all existence, material or spiritual. We may call this Reality as Substance, Being, or Brahman. The Eleatic school calls such a Reality as Being and in the Vedantic conception it is called Brahman or Atman — or better still, Brahman-Atman (to show their identity). This substance is called as Brahman when applied to the universe, and as Atman when applied to individuals. Ultimately, this Brahman and Atman are one and the same Reality because they are identical.

(2) The characteristics of such a substance or Reality called as Brahman or Atman indi-

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cate that (a) It cannot be understood in the ordinary sense, (b) It is beyond all attributes; or qualities do not exist in It, (c) It is beyond all description, thought or speech (*avangmanasagocharam*), (d) subject-object relationship does not apply to It, (e) It is the essence of all phenomena and can be designated for convenience as Existence-Knowledge-Bliss-Absolute.

(3) This Substance or Brahman is named in the Vedantic treatises as *avangamanasagocharam* because It is the Ultimate Reality which brooks no limitation. Thought cannot confine It; word cannot express It. Yet It exists in all things. Reality comprehends all and transcends them all.

(4) This Brahman or Reality is not a something in which qualities or attributes exist, or the existence to which qualities belong. It is, on the other hand, that which constitutes anything what it is. We may as well say that all things live and have their being in It.

(5) This Brahman or Substance, though without any attributes, is for convenience designated as Existence-Knowledge-Bliss-Absolute because, first of all, without existence nothing can subsist; and since Brahman does not signify individual existences which are also susceptible for destruction, It is signified as Eternal Existence. In other words It is pure Existence, pure Knowledge, pure Bliss, and the Absolute.

(6) This substance or Brahman is designated as pure knowledge because by knowing It everything else is known.

(7) The concept of substance as Brahman, though it is less appealing to many, is the most logical conception of substance we can arrive at. Even great scientists are now able to realise this fact and so they are inclined to reduce all knowledge including that of Mathematics to sheer probabilities. The concept of substance as viewed by the Western philosophers like Locke, Berkeley and Hume is only a mid-way-house to the Perenneal Philosophy of Vedanta.

In the philosophy of Vedanta, we find a solution to the problem which has confronted the philosophers and scientists since long, and herein we find a convincing answer to the question: Can the distinction between Substance and Qualities be maintained?

The answer is that the distinction pales into insignificance when we comprehend the Reality which is Brahman, Which is the only Substance, if the term is to be interpreted as that which constitutes anything what it is. That which constitutes the essence of all things is mere *Isness* which can be called either as Brahman or Atman or Reality, or by any other name we choose. According to this view of Vedanta, which is more an experience than mere exposition, the concept of substance reduces itself to a concept of Reality whose nature, though incomprehensible (*avangamanasagocharam*) may for convenience be summarised as Sat-chit-ananda Brahma which qualification is, in fact, not an attribute but the essence or Reality Itself.

The whole thing in a nutshell is that one must develop ecstatic love for Satchidananda. What kind of love? How should one love God? Gauri used to say that one must become like Sita to understand Rama; like Bhagavati, the Divine Mother, to understand Bhagavan Siva. One must cultivate the attitude of Prakriti in order to realize Purusha — the attitude of a friend, a handmaid, or a mother. .... Mad! That's the word. One must become mad with love in order to realize God. But that love is not possible if the mind dwells on 'woman and gold'. What happiness is there in sex-life? The realization of God gives ten millions times more happiness. Gauri used to say that when a man attains ecstatic love of God, in every pore of the skin the aspirant enjoys happiness of communion with the Atman.

— SRI RAMAKRISHNA

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ALAMBAZAR MATH

And the Inception of the Vow of Service

(Continued from the previous issue)

SWAMI AKHANDANANDA

Expansion of service

Nityananda was with me for about a month and then left. All along, Suren was my assistant. When we started our famine relief work I had a mind to engage a cook to prepare our own meals. But some Brahmans of the village would not let us do so. They said that they would continue as our hosts. After the distribution of doles we went for our dinner to their houses by turns. Many among them fed us for long with great regard.

In the afternoon and at night too I toured the distant villages and surveyed the condition of the people. In some villages I found no light in any house. They lived like so many ghosts, as it were.

As soon as they heard that I was the 'Dandi Thakur' of Mahula, men and women in dirty rags came and stood round me. I was extremely mortified to see their miserable plight. On my enquiring what they had to eat, their reply was, 'We boil things like arum (*kachu ghenchu*) and thorny shrubs like *kântânaté* and eat them, father'. I asked them to come next day to Mahula and take doles of rice.

At the time of our famine relief work Swami Ramakrishnananda translated my letters into English and published them in our first journal *Brahmavadin*. This effort of his helped us to collect a considerable sum from the Madras Presidency. People would know from reading the issues of the *Brahmavadin* of the year 1897, how much he exerted even at a long distance in aid of our relief work.

Money now began to come from outside to our famine fund. From the Math, Swami Brahmananda wrote us letters concerning our work and supplied funds. Suddhananda acted as his private secretary.

Charu Babu proposed that our famine relief work should be conducted in the name of the Mahabodhi Society, but Swami Brahmananda objected to it.

There was difference of opinion with the Mahabodhi Society over this name. Swamiji was then at Almora. On hearing this he wrote to me, 'Who cares for name? Let it go to hell. What we want is work.' Anyway, we stopped accepting contribution from the Mahabodhi Society.

Across the Ganga

About a month after we had started work, some distressed people of Rangamati Chandpara, on the western bank of the Ganga, informed me of their want of food. So far, people of some fifty villages under Barua Police Station (present Beldanga) on the eastern bank of the Ganga had been receiving aid from us. Rangamati Chandpara is under the Gokarna Police Station in the Kandi subdivision.

In these rural areas the Ganga has a shoal on one side and a high embankment on the other. The village Rangamati Chandpara is on the high embankment on the western side of the Ganga. The soil here is deep red like ochre and makes the name of the village, Rangamati (red earth) literally true. Like ochre they dissolve the red earth in water and paint their houses. It looks exactly like ochre.

Let me here give some particulars about the village Rangamati. I suppose it is in the jurisdiction of Karna Suvarna. Rangamati is a very small village. The villagers are culti-

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vators. On all sides of it there are mounds overgrown with shrubs and it may be presumed that once it had been a prosperous city. It is also said that it was a province of the Mahabharata hero Karna — lord of Anga. In some particular season he used to stay here for some time. It may also be supposed that Raja Saśânka, the foe of the Buddhists, reigned here. In Nikhilnath Ray's *Murshidabad Kahini* (an account of Murshidabad) it is written that some fifty years back two pieces of gold were dug out of the earth at this place. Some years back excavation work was taken up under the supervision of the archaeologist Mr. Marshall but after a short time it was stopped. The erosion of the Ganga has obliterated the site of that Rangamati.

In the morning I came to Rangamati with a Brahman of Mahula. There was a small shop on the Ganga. The lessee of the ferry was in that shop. We two surveyed the seven villages, Rangamati, Chiroti, Dabkai, Anroa, Jadupur, Madhupur and Baidyanathpur and saw the people lead a miserable existence by eating boiled arum and similar things. In no house was there a bell-metal plate ; they had sold them off to buy food. I gave tickets to many and asked them to come to Mahula for doles of rice.

Earthquake

At about four in the afternoon I came to the ferry ghat to find the ferry boat going away, conveying some bullock carts. Seeing this I waited at the shop when on feeling two shocks I realised that it was a tremor of the Earth. I at once came to the bank of the Ganga and began doing *japam* (repetition of God's name) with eyes closed. The violence of the tremor lasted till I had finished repeating a *Mantra* of one letter three hundred times over.

I opened my eyes to see the bullock carts all run aground on the other bank of the Ganga. My companion, the Brahman, showed that the chimney of the Chiroti Silk Factory had been razed to the ground. The breaking of the chimney of the silk factory, of solid masonry work, reminded me of the earthquake of Lisbon in Portugal.

As I crossed the Ganga my worry was, 'What a calamity, one closely following another! Who knows how many men have met their death in this earthquake. Oh, what a dire catastrophe!' On the way we two exchanged not a single word. I came to Mahula repeating the name of the Master all along the way. There were then four or five one-storied brick-built houses at Mahula. The building we occupied was the biggest. It now showed several cracks. We were back when there was still some time before sunset.

Muharram — fencing with sticks

After the talk on the earthquake had been over, Suren told me that a Musalman had come to show me a large crocodile he had killed, but that he had left after waiting long for me. It was the day of procession (gonyara) of the Muharram. Before my arrival there was at Mahula a big gymnasium for fencing with sticks (lathis). I now heard that the members of the defunct gymnasium were coming in a procession to show me their skill in the spacious yard of the house.

I was then overwhelmed with grief. I was in a hurry to write to those at the Math, Madras, Almora and other places giving the news of the catastrophe here and requesting them to send news of their own. The fencers had already come up and were showing their skill. All classes of the villagers, high and low, had assembled to see it.

At Mahula I heard of the miserable plight of Berhampore. My heart ached to hear it. To a famine had now been added an unthought of dire calamity. I was not in a mood to enjoy the display. Suren and Nityananda were in the gathering. More than once did Suren come to call me. He said, 'Please come along. What adroitness a fellow is showing with as many as four daggers. You have never seen such a thing.' But I sat mute in my room. Often I had the mind to ask them to go elsewhere and show their skill.

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A strange vision

When our gurubhais were asking me to come back to the Math, the palaces of Calcutta used to come before my mind's eye. It was not bricks that I saw, they were human skulls ; the mortar used was not lime and brick-dust but human flesh and blood. The buildings shook and the skulls laughed a hideous laugh and said to me, 'Don't come hither, here death awaits you. You are now in the holy abode of Sita,* in villages full of thatched cottages — How can you go elsewhere leaving them ?'

I wrote this to the Math, Madras and Almora. Within two months of my seeing this vision there was this unthought of earthquake. Surely my vision was not a mere fantasy.

I went to see the Magistrate at Berhampore. The gentleman was then on horse-back assessing the havoc caused by the earthquake. He reined up as he saw me. I said to him, 'I have started giving doles of rice to some people of Gokarna in Kandi.'

Vain attempt at sending an appeal to the Press

After our famine relief work at Mahula had continued for three months the Math deputed Virajananda to Deoghar to open a centre there. Prakasananda was in charge of distributing rice to indigent middle class families who would not come out to beg in public at Dakshineswar.

Our funds were in no way abundant, so Swami Brahmananda advised me to send a detailed report of our work to the *Basumati* every week and make known our paucity of funds. He wrote to me two or three letters to that effect, but still I was mum. So at last he wrote, 'The Brahmos send weekly reports of their work to the *Sanjibani* and appeal for money and they get money. Unless you follow them how can we remove our want ?' I now made preparations for writing a report of our work at Mahula but the paper was drenched with my tears.

As I made a second attempt the Master appeared before my mind's eye and said, 'Whom do you want ? Me or the public ? You need give a report of your work to the press not for Me but for the public. If you want the public you are to write for the press. Now choose either Me or your public.' As I heard these words of the Master in my heart of hearts, tears overpowered me.

After a few days I wrote an article full of important information. The Editor of the *Basumati* gave it the title of *Sunya Bharat* (void India). Ramakrishnananda too in Madras published in the *Brahmavadin* a faithful English translation of the letters I wrote him. I wrote nothing in the way of appeal or prayer. My letters for the Math too were published regularly in the *Basumati*.

How frail is Dame Gossip

News reached us that at the village of Binkar near Mahula one had committed suicide to escape the pain of starvation and another attempted to do that. We at once went to survey the condition of that village. The man alleged to have attempted to commit suicide related to us, with groans, the whole story of his misery and led us to his house. I found he had too many little kids. We gave them and many others in the village tickets for doles. On return to Mahula we sent a report of this day's incident to the Math.

Next day as we were distributing rice all the people of Binkar came one by one to have doles. The man who had tried to commit suicide came last. But now he was not the man we had seen the previous day. He asked us if we were helping people with cash. But seeing that we were giving only rice he went away empty-handed. On enquiry I came to know that the cause of suicide of the other man was colic-pain. The true cause of this fellow's attempt at suicide was now evident.

* Sita means the ploughshare. Mythologically the baby Sita, heroine of the Ramayana, was picked up by King Janaka in the furrows of a field under the plough. Here the abode of Sita means cultivated land. So there is a quibble.—*Translator*.

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After I had sent to the Math a report of this day I saw that my previous day's report had been published in the *Basumati*. I thought that if anybody, through malice, showed it to the Magistrate I would be in a false position. I therefore wrote to Swami Brahmananda requesting him that henceforth my private letters be not sent to the press.

Distribution of cloth and a sumptuous feast

At this time there came from the Math a consignment of cloth, old and new, for free distribution. Sri Sudhangsu Sekhar Bagchi of Berhampore now came to Mahula and said, 'This consignment will not suffice for all, I shall collect at Berhampore a few hundred pieces of cloth.' Within a few days he was successful in collecting a good deal of new cloth at Berhampore. I proposed to the Magistrate to come over to Mahula and give away the cloth. He consented. We now arranged that the poor people would have a hearty meal and a piece of cloth.

On this occasion Swami Trigunatita came to Mahula from the Math and read an article offering thanks to the Magistrate. I also said a few words thanking the gentleman. What the gentleman said in reply afterwards came to us written from Berhampore. After distribution of cloth the poor were seated for their dinner.

That day Mr. Alexander Keogh, Manager of the Indigo and Silk Factory at the neighbouring village of Sujapur, came on invitation. Under the supervision of the Assistant Manager of Maharani Swarnamoyee and at his house the European gentlemen and other gentry assembled were treated to refreshments.

After the distribution of cloth the Magistrate took his repast and then left for Berhampore. But Nrityagopal Babu, Secretary to the Famine Relief Committee, and the District Engineer and some others stayed on till nightfall.

It was arranged that the famine-stricken poor would have rice, pulse, a vegetable curry, curd and Bhuro (indigenous sugar) for their feast. Almost half a seer of rice (boiled) was served before every poor man, but before pulse was brought they ate up the mere rice. I told them to take rice with pulse and their reply was, 'All right, now let us have rice with pulse.' Then the quantity of rice they took with pulse, curry, curd and Bhuro filled me with wonder. The number of the Musalmans that came was not inconsiderable. For them we arranged Chira (beaten rice). They took Chira, curd and Bhuro and again ate rice. This is the first time in my life that I had fed more than a thousand famine-stricken men together. So the incredibly huge quantity of food they took astonished me.

Then the Sankirtan (song in praise of God) party of Atul Champaty unexpectedly came to Mahula and regaled all classes of people with their performance. That evening a smart shower resuscitated the Asu paddy crop, almost dried up in drought, and also cleaned up the place where the feeding had taken place. It was at this time that the building of the road to Mahula was taken up.

Want of Funds, Fervent Prayer and unexpected help

Call came from the Math for Trigunatita. They deputed him to open a relief centre at the village of Birole near Dinajpur. Sometime after the opening of that centre the Famine Relief Fund ran short. Injunction came from the Math against admitting new persons for receiving relief at Mahula, but I could not help taking in eight or nine fresh entrants a day.

At this time one day I sat behind closed doors and with tears in my eyes prayed to the Master, 'O Lord, redeemer from shame! You see how miserable are those that receive help from Your inexhaustible store as well as those who come new every day. If You decide that after bringing me on to the field of Your work, it should remain incomplete let it be as You will.'

As I came out of the room I found that prayer had lightened my heart and I felt as if I was purified by ablution in so many holy places.

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The very next day news came in a letter of Swami Ramakrishnananda from Madras that a gentleman of Madras had remitted a thousand rupees towards our famine fund. It was followed by another letter the next day intimating that the same gentleman would be soon remitting another five hundred. The news buoyed me up.

After I had received this fifteen hundred rupees Swami Brahmananda was glad and encouraged. He never again wrote to me warning me against extending our work of charity. Henceforth we never felt any want of money worth mentioning.

At Mahula we two — Suren and myself — had our dinner at the houses of some Brahmans by turns. But that could not continue for long. Realizing this I wrote to the Math requesting them to give us a separate aid for our board. I never wished to utilise a single penny out of the famine fund for our own expenses. I wrote two or three letters to the Math to the effect but at last they advised us for the time being to draw from the famine fund for the purpose.

This decision was not to my liking. Babu Pramadadas Mitra of Choukhamba, Banaras, was a devoted friend of ours. I requested him to send me some money for our personal expense. All my worry was for Suren. Immediately after he had left service and joined the Math, Swamiji sent him to me. He had no experience of the hard life of a sanyasi.

The expansion and fame of our vow of service is a known story to all from the *Letters of Swami Vivekananda*. All know how he gave me some valuable instructions about the importance of the vow.

The vow of service had its inception on the day of worship of Annapurna in the Bengali year 1303. After a successful conclusion of our famine relief work, the Sargachi Ashram was started with some orphan boys. For some fourteen or fifteen years the Ashram had been lodged in another person's house. Then the Ashram had its own land.

Although we are unaware of it, with the auspicious advent of Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda), the patriot-saint, a new age has been ushered in and the horizon of India has been flooded with the rays of the sun of religion of service, so ardently cherished by him.

(*Concluded*)

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DANCE OF SIVA

M. V. SRIDATTA SARMA

In Hindu mythology, we find that the origins of dance along with allied arts (*catuṣṣaṣṭikala*) are ascribed to or associated with Lord Siva. The *Sūta Samhita* describes this Lord of Ambika as the connoisseur and the expert dancer (*Mahātāndava Pandita*). Grammarians say that at the time of His celestial dance, this Lord gave fourteen strokes to the drum (*Dhakka*) and from these the *Sutras* or axioms of grammar took shape. (*sandhyāvasāne nataarāja rājo nanāda dhakkām navapanca vâram. Uddhartu kamah sanakādi siddhānetadvimarse siva sutra jālam.*—Varadaraja : *Laghu Kaumudi*).

To Lord Siva, the entire cosmos serves as the theatre. Around this is centred all rhythmic activity. He is both an actor as well the witness (audience). Icons of this dancing Lord bear in their hands the drum, the *abhaya mudrā* (gesture of protection), the fire (destroyer of nescience) and *anugrahā*. These *mudrās* have in their turn a special import. Thus, the sound of the drum (*nāda*) indicates the call for witnessing the dance, in other words it symbolises creation or projection. The *abhaya* or assurance denotes protection. The fire is suggestive of the third aspect of dissolution. The *anugraha* denotes the besto-

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wal of the highest good. We see that the Lord is depicted as cutting the threads of *Kāma* (desire), dispelling the gloom of *Māya* (illusion) and cleansing all impurities (*mala, anava* and *avidya*). By the extension of His grace, the aspirant reaches those realms of bliss.

In *Āgamic* lore, three kinds of dances are spoken of. These are : (i) The *Sandhya* accompanied by a divine chorus, (ii) the *Tāndava* or the wild dance in the cremation ground in the company of tapering imps and (iii) the *Nādanta* at Tillai (Chidambaram). The first of these, viz. the twilight dance, is indulged in at Kailas in the presence of gods, a description of which is given in the *pradośa* hymn. The second is *tāmasic* in character and in a way symbolises the destruction of the fetters of empirical existence (*samsāra*). It also denotes that state when the ego (*ahamkāra*) is removed or destroyed. The third is the state in which the soul reaches divine communion. The dance is therefore spoken of as *ānanda natana* or the dance of bliss.

The *Sūta Samhita* gives us a nice story connected with the dance of Siva. Vishnu gives directions to the gods to worship Lord Siva (spoken of as Dabhra Sabhāpati), the Lord of attainments, trampling the Apasmārapuruṣa, a veritable effigy of the *avidyā pancaka*. This Apasmāra was created by the Lord by His own Maya for seeing that its own end is served. Man is sheathed by *avidya* and consequently he becomes a *pasu* (the unrealised or fettered soul). A state of gloom or inertia (*tamas*) pervades him. This in turn leads to *moha* (a state of bewilderment). Next, he gets inclined towards the objects of the senses, enchanted as it were by the spells of *Mahāmoha* (great illusion). This state gives him a further lead when he gets succumbed or captivated (blinded towards empirical existence i.e. clinging to life). Occasionally, he is subjected to fits of passion, anger and other evil propensities. *Avidya* or illusion covers him completely and for want of enlightenment, the soul continues to remain in bondage. That state of stupefaction or bewilderment is removed by right knowledge, when all impressions of the illusory world are effaced.

The Lord holds His council in the midst of the audience. The fettered souls now get clothed with sentience (*Chidambara*) and they are exonerated from the residuary operative, resulting in the cessation or release from the chain of rebirth. (*Sarveṣām ātmavijñānādevamuktirnacānyatha*). This is as it were an act of sport or enjoyment for the Effulgent Being (*Lokavattuleelākaivalyam. Brahma Sutra* : II-1-33). It is His very nature to remain in that state of fulfilment, *Devasyaiṣa svabhavo 'yam.*

The dance takes place at Pundarikapura when the form is enabled to realise its own self or consciousness, dispelling the quintessence of the knowledge of the Self in that state of bliss. The Lord sounds the gong when the aspirants sit rapt in meditation (counting beads with the *pranava* and the *panchaksari*). Nandikeswara tells Saunaka that the Lord indulged in this dance during the two *Sandhyas*. This was visualised by Parvati on the day of the Ardra falling in the month of *Dhanus* (when the Sun posits in the zodiacal sign Sagittarius).

The City of Pundarika is in other words Brahmapura or the citadel of Brahma or the highest soul. This Brahmapura represents the lotus like cavity of the heart (*Padmakosha*). In the same manner as Vishnu dwells in the Salagrama stone, Brahman has for His abode the body and resides in close proximity with the devotee. This small space is Brahma on account of what follows, *dahare uttarebhyaḥ*. The same idea is conveyed in the Bhagavadgita also. ईश्वरस्सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ॥

Six centres wherein the Lord has established himself are mentioned in the *Sūta Samhita* (Vārānasi, Kālahasti, Vrddhācala, Pundarikapura, Valmika and Vedāraṇya). These centres may also denote the six chakras of Yoga (the lotuses through which all energy passes from *Mulādhāra* to *Sahasrāra*).

Many a devotee witnessed the scene of the dance and Saunaka at the command of the

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Lord prepared the Sutras for the *Rigveda Samhita*. (The Veda is the outer breath of the Lord. — *Yasya niśvasito vedah*). Suta said that this was what his preceptor taught him (the highest truth or *Parama tattva*). He remembered the sage Vyasa, when he descended down, being surrounded by his disciples. At Pundarikapura, they had the sacred bath and offered prayers to Mulasthāneśwara (the Lord who presides over the very foundations of faith). The Devas, Danavas and Apsarâs, besides Nandi offered their circumambulations. It was indeed a *Mahotsava*. It was a Yajna or sacrifice, an occasion for getting illumined by the knowledge of the Self (or the realisation of the Self) in which the aspirants participated प्रतीत: सर्वात्मानुभव एव ज्ञानयज्ञ: ॥ Even a great sinner like Durghata was absolved from all his sins by the spiritual bath.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

Swami Vijnananda is of the Ramakrishna Order.

"Sudama" is a new contributor to the *Vedanta Kesari*.

'India's Contribution to Education' is the fourth of the series by Dr V. N. Sharma, Madras.

Sri K. R. Venkatasubramanian formerly from Kalimpong is now in Poona.

Sri M. V. Sridatta Sarma is from Mysore.

NEED TO AROUSE CIVIC CONSCIOUSNESS

With the dawn of independence and the installation of responsible governments people of the country as a whole seemed to have grown in the knowledge of their rights and think of asserting them. Another peculiar fact, which is probably overlooked by most of us, is that some organizations which pose as well-wishers of labour today dared not speak a single word nor raise a finger in protest when the British ruled over the country. However, all of a sudden they have become magnanimous and feel intensely wounded at the way labour is being treated. They have entered into every union and try to wreck the peaceful atmosphere of the country. Another beauty of it is that most of the instigators and fosterers of strikes are not at all affected by the workmen losing their jobs or starving due to their staying away. It is about these that we have to be highly and vigilantly careful.

The first thing we must remember before we even think of putting forth claim to our rights is to search our hearts and ascertain whether we have been doing our duties conscientiously, regularly and without restraint. If not, we cannot claim even a jot of the ocean of rights which we may possess, for do we not see even in a common household of the ordinarily good people that if the father having the means fails to bring up his children in a way suited to his condition he also fails to command any respect from them? Do we not see that the children brought up by the maid servants have no love for their parents though they may look upon them with awe? This is but the law of nature. Even a dog does not come near a person who treats it not properly. Show it a little consideration and it is your slave for ever. Here even in the case of the dog you had a duty and then only your right got established without your ever wanting it. Duties bestow rights and rights have liabilities involved in them. This is to be remembered.

So this consciousness of duty is to be aroused by us not in others but in ourselves

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first and then others may take it from us. In a community we are knit together and each has a duty towards the other and it is becoming more so on account of the specialization in all fields of work. When such is the case nobody has any right to jeopardize the life of the whole community by any rash and unthinking act. We have therefore to be aware of those fresh-found friends who posing as well-wishers come to wreck the smooth life of our community and country.

Let us not forget here that when we say that every one should be conscious of the duty we not only mean the workers but also the employers. It is the duty of the employer to see to the welfare of his employee and then only can he assert his right to demand work from him. He cannot expect a half-starved worker to be dutiful or honest. On the other hand a well paid worker has no right to be dishonest. It is sad that because this common and ordinary consciousness of civic duties is not aroused in us, we become neglectful and endanger innocent lives, as in the case of bus and railway accidents, disrupt communications and normal life as in the case of strikes in the essential services and the like. May we hope that with the passage of time our people will be roused to civic duties as they have been to civil liberties and rights?

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

A HISTORY OF THE DVAITA SCHOOL OF VEDANTA AND ITS LITERATURE

DISCUSSION

S. S. RAGHAVACHAR

I am glad that the learned author of "A History of the Dvaita" has come out with a reply in the *Vedanta Kesari* of July 1961 to my review of it published in the same Journal in its April number. This gives an opportunity for me to rediscuss his learned work and to examine whether he has met the points of my criticism. This re-discussion aims at the clarification of the issues and thus may enable the readers to discriminate the facts from fiction for themselves.

1. He does not endeavour to answer my charge that his valuation of Advaita is superficial and unfair. I take it that he admits the validity of my observation and hence directs his attention to other questions.

2. I pointed out that in his treatment of the evolution of Indian thought prior to Sri Madhva he simply presents the standpoint of Dvaita on that evolution and hence there is glaring redundancy as the whole matter comes up again in his description of the works of Madhva. The point of the criticism may be verified in the case of the discussion of the Brahma-Sutras in two places. In reply Dr Sarma asserts the distinction between the historical method and traditional method. My point was precisely this, that he does not rise to the requirements of the true historical method and adopts the traditional method and wishes the readers to take it as genuine historical treatment. History as shaped by the predilections of a tradition can become a very poor thing indeed. But this is entirely a formal defect and certainly minor.

3. My other formal criticism was that a compact presentation of the chief tenets of the school was necessary at some stage in the book and in its absence due appreciation of details is blocked. The learned author seems to accept the criticism and directs us to his other work published by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. Whatever the adequacy of the latter, it is good that the need for supplementation is recognized. The gap in exposition in the present work is admitted and nothing more need be said on the matter.

4. It is a curious piece of obstinacy which makes our author discredit Dr Das Gupta as a historian of Dvaita and accord finality to his judgment on the relative merits of Dvaita and Visistadvaita Dialectics. How can criticism and evaluation be sound or dependable when mastery over relevant data is lacking and the perspective is damaged by 'limited range and interest'? Whatever the glory of Dvaita Dialectics this piece of sophistry constitutes no good example at it. Surely performance is infinitely

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better than pathetic dependence on ill-informed testimonials.

5. I am ready to concede gladly that Dr Sarma encountered 'hard nuts to crack' in answering Sri Ghate's 'Strictures on Madhva's Sutra-Bhashya' especially in view of his frank admission that it is a 'fragmentary vindication'. His promise of a fuller treatment is most welcome.

6. I pointed out in my review that the treatment of the history of Mutts was not quite necessary and actually undesirable as it arouses unphilosophical reactions. I could not see any philosophical or spiritual significance in the laboured conclusion that the Tuluva Mutts were authentically founded by Madhva though their pontiffs made no philosophical contributions to the school and that the other Mutts like the Uttaradi Mutt were not so founded though their pontiffs made substantial contributions. This is a piece of church-history worth nothing from the point of view of the pure evolution of Vedantic ideas. It hurts and adds nothing to our wisdom. But Dr Sharma refuses to understand this well-meant observation and asserts the utter relevance of the matter to his theme. He may be right only if his highly questionable proposition that 'Mutts ..... are the institutions through whose activities and through the activities of whose pontiffs the literature and philosophy of the Dvaita school have developed'. There is a confusion of the effects for causes here. The Mutts have arisen to perpetuate the memory of the great masters and subsist and flourish on their reputation. They are a social testimony to the power of the great saints and thinkers and are in no way creative agencies. The great personalities and their ideas belong to the realm of causes and these institutions belong to the realm of effects, which often frustrate the designs of their exalted originators. Is not Dr Sharma making the fossils give birth to the living species of which they are the dead deposits? Dr Sharma is prepared to cut down the philosophical claims of his work, in order to create scope for his history of the Dvaita Church. It is a matter of regrettable taste and does not admit of controversy.

7. Now I come to the interesting question whether Ramanuja accepts the Karikas of the Agama Prakarana of Gaudapada as belonging to Mandukya Upanishad. The facts of the case are simple. Even as Shankara never quotes from the Mandukya Upanishad in his Sutra-Bhashya, Ramanuja nowhere quotes from the Upanishad in his works. Shankara quotes from the Karikas and explicity ascribes them to the great Acharya of the Advaitic tradition. Sureswara is quite clear on Gaudapada's authorship of the Karikas in Naishkarmya Siddhi. Ramanuja must be presumed to have known these Advaitic works from which he often quotes in his Sri-Bhashya. If he held them as belonging to the Upanishad in contradistinction to this standing Advaitic tradition, he ought to have made the point clear. On the contrary all that we have is that he quotes the verse 'Anadi Mayaya Supto ...' twice, once in Mahapurvapaksha and once in Mahasiddhanta. Nothing more is there and no identification of it as Sruti is there. The next greatest authority in Visistadvaita is Sudarsana Suri, the author of Srutaprakasika. In his comment on the Purvapaksha he does not identify the passage and that is right. It is the Purvapakshin who is quoting and his view on the verse as that of Gaudapada is authoritative in the context. When it is repeated in Mahasiddhanta there arises a problem. It may lead to the presumption that Ramanuja takes it as Sruti. Hence Sudarsana Suri, who always says the right things in the right places, points out that the Purva-Pakshin is betrayed by his own words. It is a case of *Swavachana virodha*. Dr Sharma argues about it but does not face the actual words of Srutaprakasika. They are '*Mayabhi Bhavo Jivasyeva ityasmin Arthe paroktameva vachanamaha*'. It is a statement which is *parokta* and not *parodahrita*. The words offer a challenge to Dr Sharma's interpretation. It was obligatory on his part to come to grips with them. Instead of that he blissfully deviates to other writers and defends the authority of one of them on geneological grounds. The next comprehensive authority on the Upanishads in Visistadwaita tradition is Ranga Ramanuja. He drops out the Karikas altogether and comments on what the Advaitic tradition regards as forming the Upanishad. The reviewer is ready to confess humbly that his study of the Visistadvaita tradition is inadequate but on this particular question he happens to be well-guided. He is following the Jayatirtha of Visistadvaita. The correctness of his understanding of Sudarsana Suri is established by the great gloss on Srutaprakasika 'Sudhartha-sangraha'. (page 150)

8. In the course of the review I recorded my painful impression that Dr Sharma indulges in an unjustified depreciation of Sri Madhva with a view to glorify the services of Jayatirtha. While the motive is laudable the means adopted is disastrous. It is no wilful unfairness on my part. Why does Dr Sharma go out of the way to

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apologise for M. B. T. Nirnaya not being a Kavya when it is expressly conceived as a Sastra? Why does he confess that Madhva's interpretation of the Aitareya Upanishad — an all-important Scripture for Dvaita — convinces only the converts? Why does he say things which imply that some of the authorities quoted by Madhva are in the nature of forgeries? Why does he make statements like the following?

'There is no patient working out of the organic methodology of doctrines' (303) 'An extraordinary brevity of expression envelops his views in some obscurity.' 'These lacunae in thought, methodology, details of exposition and finesse of Siddhanta had naturally to be made good.' (304)

It may be that the writer has respect for Madhva which is 'made of deeper and sterner stuff'. But why does he cut himself loose from it when he intends paying tributes to Sri Jayatirtha? 'Madhva rarely goes into the intricacies of doctrines and their *minutiae* in the manner of other Bhashyakaras. This need for such technical reconditioning and rounding off of the system does not appear to have been adequately realized or met till the days of Jayatirtha.' (304) True respect does not express itself thus and does not need to be wrung out by criticism.

9. Now I come to Dr Sharma's estimate of Visistadvaita. He claims that his criticism is 'what can properly be urged from the point of view of Madhva's Theism.' I very much doubt the accuracy of this derivation. I am honestly afraid that he is misinterpreting the historical Dvaita attitude to Visistadvaita. But that is not my chief concern. I urged in my review the philosophical necessity for regarding the finite realities as being integral and organic to the Infinite life of God. While one-sided dependence is alright, one-sided relation is a logical impossibility. Dr Sharma entertains this wholly untenable conception of one-sided relation when he says that 'the world of matter and souls may be bound to God perpetually but such relation could neither be essential nor reciprocal. The existence of others must in the last philosophical analysis, be immaterial to the inmost constitution of the Supreme' (91) Dr Sharma does not go to the logical root of the issue and gets off with a lengthy quotation from Dr Radhakrishnan's general estimate of Ramanuja. This is a poor enough defence by itself. He reinforces it with a deliberate misquotation from the review. Nowhere in my review have I committed the blunder of saying that the finites are 'Constitutive of the total fact of Divine life' or 'constitutive of the total glory of God'. Why does he ascribe such an absurd statement to me? What I have asserted is that they are 'integral to the total fact of divine life'. To be 'integral' is not to be 'exhaustively constitutive'. English words do not seem to carry their natural meaning to Dr Sharma or he makes false ascriptions deliberately. I leave it at that. Apart from a highly controversial opinion of Dr Radhakrishnan and this piece of misquotation, Dr Sharma offers no other argument in defence of his position. He wants to know whether Gunas such as Jnana and Vibhutis such as the Jiva are constitutive of the total fact of divine life in exactly the same sense. We can give him satisfaction on this point. The Srutaprakasika points out that the complete definition of God must include both the adjectival modes i.e., the Gunas and Vibhutis. A definition that leaves out the latter is deficient and does not bring out the full expanse of the Divine Reality (1-1-2). Just as one Guna, say Jnana, is not the same as another such as Daya, the set of Prakara called Gunas are not the same as the set called Vibhutis. But the fact of inseparable relation is the same though the exact way in which they characterize the substantive, the Viseshyaswarupa of Brahman, are different. Gunas and Vibhutis are both Viseshanas of the Swarupa of Brahman whatever their mutual difference and Brahman in its wholeness of being is the Visista. In fact between themselves the Gunas entail Vibhutis and the Vibhutis entail the Gunas. They together belong to Brahman to the same degree of inseparability. If we analyse the single attribute of Anantatwa or infinitude we discover that Brahman is both Gunapurna and Vibhutipurna. It has yet to be seen how this clarification—and very much more is found in the great works of the School — can lend plausibility to his naive denunciation of the school. We may await further elaboration.

10. When all is said and done I still maintain that Dr Sharma has produced a good work and can yet produce fuller treatises. He must avoid cavalier criticism of other schools, for that way lies his Waterloo.

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NEWS AND REPORTS

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH, MADRAS

Birthday Celebrations of Swami Vivekananda

The hundredth birthday tithipuja of Swami Vivekananda was observed in the Math on Sunday, January 28, 1962. The day started with group meditation followed by Mangalarati at 5 a.m. After devotional songs, chanting of select portions of the Gita and the Upanishads took place. The worship in the shrine started at 8 a.m. and came to a close at 1 p.m. after the homa was performed. The Chandi, Gita and Kathopanishad were also chanted ceremonially. About 1,150 devotees and 750 Daridranarayanas were served with food prasad. After the evening arati and bhajan some select teachings of Swamiji were read by Swami Suddhasatwananda and then the gathering was addressed by Swami Paramatmananda and Swami Kailashananda.

The public function came off on Sunday, February 4, 1962. Before the beautifully decorated picture of Swamiji in the hall there was silent reading of about 4,000 pages of the Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda.

In the afternoon the function started at 3 p.m. with Harikatha Kalakshepam on Thiruneelakantha Nayanar by Sri Thiruvarur N. Ramachandra Sarma. The meeting started at 5 p.m. with Dr C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar in the chair. Swami Kailashananda welcomed the Chairman and the speakers. Prof. D. Ch. Krishnayya, of Presidency College, Madras, Sri I. J. Naidu, Secretary, Government of Andhra Pradesh, Sri K. Panchapagesa Iyer and Sri K. V. Jagannathan, Editor, *Kalaimagal* addressed the gathering in Telugu, English, Sanskrit and Tamil respectively. They dwelt on the different aspects of Swami Vivekananda's life which kept the audience spell bound. After the distribution of prizes to the best three essays to college students the Chairman requested the Hon'ble Mr. Chief Justice S. Ramachandra Aiyer of Madras to release the translations of Swami Vivekananda's Complete Works in Tamil and Telugu. In his presidential address Dr C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar said: 'Swami Vivekananda was convinced that merely harping on the past was not a solution to the problems of the country. They had to relieve the distress of the people and make them look up and progress in every direction, before people could assimilate and imbibe spiritual ideas.' He also read from the pamphlet Thus Spake Vivekananda the relevant passage: "Before flooding India with socialistic and political ideas, first deluge the land with spiritual ideas". He said 'this advice had the greatest value today, when what was required was to broadcast the truths contained in our Upanishads, scriptures and Puranas all over the land. Swami Vivekananda combined in him the wisdom of the East with the organising capacity of the West and that was responsible for his organization of the Ramakrishna Mission throughout the country'.

Continuing Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar said, 'Many people only knew that Swami Vivekananda was earlier known as Narendra, but few possibly knew that he was also known by the name "Vividishananda", meaning, one who was a seeker after knowledge and it was at the request of one of his disciples, the Maharaja of Khetri, that he took the name Vivekananda. His main message was the message of divinity in man. He was the first to tell the West that while in India there was poverty and misery it was also her tradition that the most downtrodden were part of the divine and every person, whether Eastern or Western, had this spark of divinity in him. His mission was to make this divinity emerge, evolve and manifest itself. He worked with a passionate idea to preserve this spiritual urge; which was India's heritage but shorn of encrustments.'

Release of Translations of Works

Another function at this meeting was the releasing of the translations of Swami Vivekananda's works. At the outset, Swami Suddhasatwananda, Secretary of the Celebration Committee said that about a year ago it was decided to bring out the complete works of Swami Vivekananda into Tamil and Telugu and Madras was a pioneer in the project. Centres in other states had also started translating the complete works in eight regional languages. Towards the cost of publication, which was estimated at Rs. Three lakhs, the Government of India had sanctioned a grant of Rs. one lakh, the Madras Government Rs. 8,000 and the Government of Andhra Pradesh Rs. 30,000. Besides that, the Madras Government had authorised all Panchayat Unions to contribute upto Rs. 50 towards the cost of publication, and the Andhra Pradesh Government had authorised their Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Unions to contribute Rs. 100 and Rs. 50 respectively, for the same purpose. In this connection, he said that the people of Bengal had placed an order for 22,000 copies of the works in Bengali. He thanked the press, the edi-

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tors, the Governments and all those who had helped in the great endeavour.

Releasing the publications, Mr. S. Ramachandra Aiyar, Chief Justice of Madras, said that Swami Vivekananda was one of the greatest sons of India, who opened the eyes of her people to the immortal spiritual greatness of Hindu religion. His lectures delivered nearly 65 years ago, which had great value at the time, had greater value today in a world torn by strife.

Sri K. Balasubramania Aiyar proposed a vote of thanks. After Arati there was Bhajana led by Swami Priyananda, for about an hour and the function came to a close at about 9-15 p.m.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, MADRAS-4

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA CENTENARY

AN APPEAL

At a meeting of the citizens of Madras held at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, under the Presidentship of Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar on the 7th of January, 1962 the following resolution was passed :

"This meeting of the citizens of Madras convened at the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras on Sunday the 7th January, 1962, resolves that necessary steps be taken to celebrate in a fitting manner in the City and throughout the State of Madras, on convenient dates during the period January 1963 to January 1964, the Birth Centenary of Swami Vivekananda, the chosen disciple of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, the founder of the world-wide Ramakrishna Math and Mission and the great Patriot-Saint of India who roused his fellow countrymen to a consciousness of their Immortal spiritual heritage and who beginning from the Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893, raised India's status high in the estimation of the people of the West by his soul-stirring exposition of the universal message of harmony and peace."

To implement the resolution, a Centenary Committee consisting of distinguished citizens of Madras has been constituted. Dr. Radhakrishnan, the Vice-President of India, Sri Bishnuram Medhi, the Governor of Madras and Sri K. Kamaraj, the Chief Minister of Madras have kindly consented to be its Patrons. An Executive Committee has also been formed.

The following are some of the main items suggested for the celebrations :

		Estimated Cost Rs.	nP.
1.	Construction of a well-equipped Library, Reading Room, Children's Corner and Auditorium in commemoration of the Centenary	3,51,000	00
2.	Publication of the Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda in Tamil and Telugu in 10 Volumes each	3,00,000	00
3.	Publication of an authentic biography of Swami Vivekananda in Tamil	55,000	00
4.	Free distribution of booklets and picture cards depicting the life and message of Swamiji	10,000	00
5.	Upgrading the Sri Ramakrishna Math National Girls' Higher Elementary School in George Town, Madras to a High School for Girls naming it 'Vivekananda Centenary Girls' High School'	1,00,000	00
6.	Installation of a statue of Swami Vivekananda in front of the Ice House (Marina)	1,25,000	00
7.	Exhibition depicting some notable episodes from Swamiji's life	25,000	00
8.	Arranging public meetings, inter-religious conferences, seminars, elocution and essay competitions	5,000	00
9.	Feeding of the poor and distribution of clothes to them	5,000	00
10.	Distribution of fruits and sweets among the hospital patients in the leper asylum, T.B. hospital and among children	5.000	00
11.	Celebrations in the Districts (Rs. 2,000/- for each district roughly)	25,000	00
12.	Endowment of a chair in the name of Swami Vivekananda in the University of Madras	15,000	00
13.	Pandals, Chairs, Electricity etc.	3,000	00
14.	Printing, Postage, Stationery, Travelling and Collection Charges	3,000	00
15.	Miscellaneous	5,000	00
	TOTAL ..	10,32,000	00

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We, the undersigned earnestly appeal to one and all in this part of the country and in Madras City in particular to contribute liberally to make the Centenary Celebrations a success.

Contributions in kind or cash or by cheque may kindly be made to "The Ramakrishna Mission — Swami Vivekananda Centenary, Madras" and this will be acknowledged gratefully. Donations to the Mission are exempt from Incometax under Section 15B of the Incometax Act.

Swami Kailashananda
Sri K. Kamaraj
Sri C. Subramaniam
Sri M. Bhaktavatsalam
Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar
Dr. A. Lakshmanaswamy Mudaliar
Col. V. Subrahmanyam
Sri V. T. Krishnamachari
Raja Sir M. A. Muthia Chettiar
Dr. P. V. Cherian
Sri S. Anantaramakrishnan
Sri K. Balasubramanya Aiyar
Sri O. V. Alagesan
Smt. Muthulakshmi Reddy
Sri Ramanath Goenka
Sri G. Narasimhan
Sri S. V. Ramamoorthy
Sri A. M. M. Murugappa Chettiar
Sri V. C. Ganesan
Sri G. Kuchelar
Sri K. S. Ramaswamy Sastry
Sri S. Varadachari
Sri T. S. Santhanam
Mrs. Mary Clubwala Jadav
Sister R. S. Subbalakshmi
Sri S. S. Vasan
Sri T. Sadasivan
Sri C. S. Loganatha Mudaliar
Sri V. K. Ramaswamy Mudaliar
Sri V. Pandurangayya
Sri J. V. Somayajulu
Sri P. Suryanarayana
Sri M. P. Sivagnanam
Sri B. Jagannath Das
Sri Lalchand Dadha
Sri M. Cr. Muthiah
Sri Karumuttu Thiagarajan
Swami Suddhasatwananda

The 127th Birthday of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna falls on Thursday, 8th March 1962.

VEDANTA KESARI

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I, Swami Suddhasatwananda, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature of the Publisher,
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Srimath Swami Vishuddhanandaji Maharaj
The New President of the Ramakrishna Math & Mission

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.... Be bold and face
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease.
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XLVIII APRIL 1962 No. 12

FROM THE TREE OF DIVINE LORE

Sri Ramakrishna was in a happy mood. The Brahmo devotees sang their devotional music. Vijay and the devotees sat in front of the Master.

Sri Ramakrishna (to Vijay, with a smile) : " I was told, you had put a ' sign-board ' here, that people belonging to other faiths are not allowed to enter.

" But I say that we are all calling on the same God. It is not good to feel that my religion alone is true and other religions are false.

" I see people who constantly quarrel about religion with one another. They haven't the intelligence to understand that He who is called Krishna, is also Siva and the Primal Sakti, and that it is He, again, who is called Jesus and Allah. ' There is only one Rama and He has a thousand names. '

" Do you know what the truth is ? God has made different religions to suit different aspirants, times, and countries. All doctrines are only so many paths ; but a path is by no means God Himself. Indeed, one can reach God if one follows any of the paths with whole-hearted devotion.

" The important thing is to reach the roof. You can reach it by stone stairs, wooden stairs, or by a rope. You can also climb up by a bamboo pole.

" You may say that there are many errors and superstitions in other religions. I should reply : Suppose there are. Every religion has errors. Everyone thinks that his watch alone gives the correct time. It is enough to have yearning for God. It is enough to love Him and feel attracted to Him. Don't you know that God is the Inner Guide ? He sees the longing of our heart and the yearning of our soul. Suppose a man has several sons. The older boys address him distinctly as ' Baba ' or ' Papa ', but the babies can at best call him ' Ba ' or ' Pa '. Now, will the father be angry with those who address him in this indistinct way ? The father knows that they too are calling him, only they cannot pronounce his name well. All children are the same to the father. Likewise, the devotees call on God alone, though by different names. They call on one Person only. God is One, but His names are many. "

(Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna)

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DOCTRINE OF KARMA

The one tenet which, perhaps, cannot be met with in any philosophy other than that of the Hindus is the doctrine of Karma, and rebirth. It is the foundation, the basis, as it were of Hindu philosophy, especially Vedanta. At the same time it is the most logical as well as the most scientific explanation of the inequalities and diversities in human life: inequalities in the physical, mental, intellectual, moral and spiritual planes. Other theories such as predestination put forward as an explanation for the acute differences existing in this world do not appeal to reason. It cannot be comprehended that a just and merciful Lord can predestine one innocent soul not yet born to go through the fiery ordeal of sorrows and pains while He lavishly bestows pleasures on another. It is unthinkable. Again the idea of predestination lays axe at the very root of the individual's effort to rise above his surroundings. Naturally he will ask, if everything is predestined and nothing can alter the course of his life why should he make efforts to do good? He will like to derive as much pleasure as possible by any means in this life.

Observation of the phenomena of the world, however, says a different tale altogether. If a man steals or murders he is punished. If one eats gluttonously he suffers from ailments of the body. A farmer who sows paddy reaps a paddy harvest and not of wheat. So also say the sages man comes into this world to work out the fruits of his own actions of his past lives, and what he does now goes to build his future. This is the law of Karma simple and logical. However, there is no knowing when and why the first birth started but as far as we can infer from our daily experience in this mundane life it stands to reason that one reaps the fruit of one's own action.

Science also supports this view though not directly but by the explanations it has to give in its own field. 'Science' says Swami Vivekananda, 'wants to explain everything by habit and habit is got through repetitions. So repetitions are necessary to explain the natural habits of a new born soul. And since they were not obtained in this present life, they must have come down from past lives.'

Now what is this Karma? Karma ordinarily means action as derived from the Sanskrit root *kri,* but it has also come to mean the cause of action. Here it must be remembered that Karma does not mean only the physical action but also includes mental action, thoughts. No action is done without a thought behind it. In the Hindu Scriptures we come across passages where the Supreme Godhead first desired 'May I be many',[1] and through austerities created all this. In the ordinary actions of the world also we experience this. Every action produces an effect and every cause a sequence. This effect in its turn becomes the cause of a further action and so on the unending chain of action unrolls itself. Every action therefore presupposes a cause and involves in itself the seed of the next action. Therefore Karma in popular parlance has come to mean action as well as that which causes it. There are other meanings of Karma according to the context as in the Mimamsa school. They say Karma means only action enjoined in the Vedas.

Again the psychologists of India like Patanjali tell us that the clinging to life which we see manifested even in the learned is a proof of the past experience and existence. They also tell us that every action throws the mind into modifications (*vritti*) and every modification leaves an impression on the mind. When actions are repeated the impressions cut furrows as it were, in the brain cells. Then onwards our life begins to move along the line of these furrows and the mind resists all

[1] सोऽकामयत बहु स्यां प्रजायेयेति ।

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deviation from this track. The sum total of impressions of our whole life, the mind carries with it at the end of this physical frame to manufacture a new body.

The law of Karma is inexorable. No one can avoid it, no one cheat it. No one can transcend it except under particular and rare circumstances. Good actions bring in good results and bad actions bad. In other words it is like our seeing our own image in a mirror. If we laugh the image too laughs and if you make faces the image makes faces too. If at the time of seeing our image in a demon-like condition we get afraid and shriek and tremble no one else is to be blamed for that for we did it ourselves perhaps to frighten somebody else. Similarly no one is to be blamed for our present plight neither God nor Satan nor anyone else except ourselves. We are seeing our own image. This is the conclusion of the law of Karma.

As it is inexorable so is it immitigable. The reaction to every action is equal in momentum. The gun that is fired recoils in a measure equal in force to the bullet that is projected, only it is not appreciably perceived because of the weight of the gun. By this law we have that every evil or good that we do, returns to or recoils on us with an equal force.

The question now arises if work is such a terrible thing with power to involve us into the abysmal depths of bondage, why work at all? Yes, that will be the ideal state when nothing compels one to work; where the body and the senses though strong cannot drag one unwillingly to do any action — when they are effectively controlled; where the mind does not run after the sense pleasures or think of anything other than about Brahman or Atman. Sri Krishna explains this forcefully when he says that only such a person whose delight is in the Atman, whose satisfaction is in the Atman and whose contentment is in the Atman alone, has no duties.[2] Here Karma has been interpreted as duty. The three separate words used in this context may seem to be redundant but it is not so. This will be clear if we refer to the Sanskrit words that have been used: *âtmaratih, âtmatraptah,* and *âtmani santushṭah.* Usually the generality of mankind takes delight in the gross sense enjoyments, their satisfaction is also in them. But in reality there is no satisfaction in the enjoyments of the worldly pleasures as King Yayati put it, after his long life of intense enjoyment. He said that desires fulfilled by enjoyment only grow stronger, like the fire fed with clarified butter they burn more vigorously. As against this is the eternal satisfaction in the Self and one who has reached that state alone has no duties to perform. It is the highest state, and man has to struggle hard to reach it.

Man has to work every moment of his life even for the preservation of his body. Then he has to work to get rid of his past impressions, to rise in the ladders of moral and spiritual evolutions. However, no work can be perfectly good or completely evil. Every good work has some evil in it and even the most evil work does some good somewhere. According to the law of Karma one has to reap the fruits both good and evil. So then what is the way out of this labyrinth? It seems to be an impossible puzzle. But that is the situation and that has to be faced.

Let us get down to brass tacks now. We have first the *prârabdha* karma — the results of the actions that have already begun to bear fruit — on account of which we have obtained the present body. Secondly there is the *sanchita* karma — the fruits of our actions which are in store. Thirdly the *kriyamâna* karma, the results of the actions which we are doing every day. Lastly there comes the *âgâmi* karma, the fruits of the future actions. With such a stupendous load is it ever possible to get beyond the round of births and deaths is the question. But before proceeding to deal with this it is necessary to elucidate some points.

[2] यस्त्वात्मरतिरेव स्यादात्मतृप्तश्च मानवः ।
आत्मन्येव च संतुष्टस्तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते ॥
Gita III. 17.

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There are people who term this theory of Karma of the Hindus as fatalism. It is a gross misrepresentation of a law so obvious and eternally experienced. Fatalism is something which does not stand before reason, which is something that resembles an autocrat and is a dogma or belief difficult to reconcile with modern thinking. Again it is some external power whereas the doctrine of Karma makes one the architect of one's own life and something which is in man. It places the responsibility of one's condition squarely on one's own shoulders. There is not even the slightest similarity between fatalism and the doctrine of Karma. One is the antipodes of the other.

There are also people who jeer at the idea of rebirth. To them we have to say that if birth in heaven and hell is possible then why not on this earth where man is given another chance to become perfect, which is a reasonable proposition in the realm of a just God. According to the Hindus even the highest heavens are but a repetition of this world of senses, where sense enjoyments are intense but that too is not to be coveted by one who wants the cessation of the round of births and deaths, who wants to be liberated. The *Katha Upanishad* gives us a story impregnate with this lofty ideal, viz. the story of Nachiketa. The one desire of Nachiketa was to know about the Self. The Lord of Death tempts him in several ways; by offering a long life, divine damsels and wealth and possessions. But the reply of the boy was, 'I do not want any other boon than to know about the Self.' He is convinced of the ephemerality of things worldly or heavenly so he wanted that by which he could go across the ocean of *samsara.*

Let us now revert to the question, how to get out of this maze? Our seers and sages say that there are ways out of it and the science of action or Karma-yoga is one of the paths. If we know how to work, they say, we will be able to elude the snare of this karma. The first reaction to this statement would be: everyone works in the world, what is there special to know about how to work? Swami Vivekananda says, 'But there is such a thing as frittering away of energies. With regard to Karma-Yoga, the *Gita* says that it is doing work with cleverness and as a science; by knowing how to work, one can obtain the greatest results.'

Ordinarily men work with some motive or other. Name, fame, material wealth, creature comforts and heaven are some of the motives which goad man to work. But this is playing into the hands of the monster and not getting out of them. We have to give up all motives. In other words we have to learn to work for work's sake, learn to be unselfish. Swami Vivekananda asks 'If a man works without any selfish motive in view, does he not gain anything? Yes, he gains the highest. Unselfishness is more paying, only people have not the patience to practise it. It is more paying from the point of view of health also.' Sri Krishna says in the *Gita* 'To work only you have the right and not to the fruits thereof.'[3] If we are attached to the results we work like slaves and by giving up attachment we can work like masters. So the secret of Karma Yoga is that we have to be intensely active and incessantly doing good and at the same time should not desire for their results. If a man can work, 'even for five minutes, without any selfish motive whatever, without thinking of future, of heaven, of punishment, or anything of the kind he has in him the capacity to become a powerful moral giant,' says Swami Vivekananda. By becoming pure and moral one reaches perfection in this very life and sunders all bonds of Karma. All the *sanchita* karma is destroyed, the *kriyamâna* and *âgami* karma do not bear any fruit.

How does action done without attachment or whose fruits are offered to God not bind us? Let us take a concrete and everyday experience. One sees several faces everyday. Does one remember all of them? No. But some particular face may come often to one's mind. Why? Because one was attracted by it, one was becoming attached to it. It has

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[3] कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन।

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left an impression on one's mind whereas all others have vanished. Working without attachment is like seeing those innumerable faces which leave no impression behind. Working thus one does not gather impressions; one does not add to one's store of karma, that is one's mind gets purer and purer. Now in a pure mind only good thoughts can arise, even to a person who has done harm one, of pure mind, has love to give. The snake in the parable of Sri Ramakrishna totally forgot it was severely belaboured by the boys when they found it did not bite. It took a long time for it to remember that it had grown weak because of the beating and even when it remembered, the venom of hatred was absent. Such is the efficacy of Karma done without motive or whose fruits are offered to God.

Again work in its natural course may affect him physically but it leaves no impression on his mind and has no power therefore to produce any effect, like the seeds that have been fried before sowing: they have no vitality to germinate. The mind remains pure like the silver-screen which is not tainted by the thousands of pictures projected on it. Thus does one break the bond of karma. Only one has to live as long as one's *prârabdha* karma lasts. 'Work without attachment, however, is exceedingly difficult, especially in this age. Hence communion with God by prayer, devotion and Love has been enjoined as better adapted to this age,' says Sri Ramakrishna. Further he says, 'In this age work without devotion to God has no legs to stand upon. It is like a foundation of sand.' So we have to dedicate all our work to God. Sri Krishna exhorts Arjuna in the *Bhagawad Gita*: 'Give unto me the results of whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever sacrifice you perform, whatever charity you make, and whatever austerities you undergo. In this way alone will you be free from the bondage of the good and evil effects of Karma and then full of the spirit of renunciation you will be liberated and come to Me.'[4]

Recapitulating, we have: The doctrine of Karma gives us the means of improving ourselves instead of adducing everything to God or Fate. It is a saving message and does not go against rational thinking and therefore must appeal to the scientist as well as the devotee. Work which usually tries to forge bondage can be made use of for getting out of it. The method of doing so is called Karma Yoga—working without motive. The other paths for liberating ourselves from the clutches of *samsara* are bhakti, jnana and yoga. When once therefore, the principle underlying this doctrine is understood an aspirant can adopt any method to get out of the bondage. The doctrine of Karma again especially helps us to be self-confident, to have faith in ourselves.

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[4] यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासियत्।
यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम्।
शुभाशुभफलैरेवं मोक्ष्यसे कर्म बंधनैः।
संन्यासयोगयुक्तात्मा विमुक्तो मामुपैष्यसि॥
Gita IX. 27-28.

Our duty to others means helping others; doing good to the world. Why should we do good to the world? Apparently to help the world, but really to help ourselves. We should always try to help the world, that should be the highest motive in us; but if we consider well, we find that the world does not require our help at all. This world was not made that you or I should come and help it. I once read a sermon in which it was said: 'All this beautiful world is very good, because it gives us time and opportunity to help others.' Apparently, this is a very beautiful sentiment, but is it not a blasphemy to say that the world needs our help? We cannot deny that there is much misery in it; to go out and help others is, therefore, the best thing we can do, although in the long run, we shall find that helping others is only helping ourselves.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA—AN EXAMPLE OF THE HIGHEST EMOTIONAL PURITY AND ETHICAL PERFECTION

SWAMI VIMALANANDA

Sri Ramakrishna renounced everything for God and God was everything for him. Those fortunate contemporaries who were attracted to Dakshineswar witnessed his countenance radiating divine love for all, his divine smile, his eyes sparkling with divine joy and listened to a ceaseless flow of words soaked in wisdom. Now he was transfixed in divine vision, now he was singing songs that transported him and those who were present to regions beyond the senses. Every act of his had a stamp of excellence. That was the historic personality of Sri Ramakrishna which disappeared from the scene of action seventy-six years ago.

Though Sri Ramakrishna's physical appearance was withdrawn from human sight, he was soon transformed into a divine symbol cherished in the hearts of innumerable devotees. As a divine personality he came to exert a more pervasive influence with the passage of time. Bengal that gave birth to the historic Sri Ramakrishna became another Bethlehem for pilgrims from different parts of the world who were inspired by the divine ideal of Ramakrishna. Southern India educated in the tradition of divine love accepted Sri Ramakrishna high-up in the tradition of God-intoxicated Alwars, Nayanmars and Haridasas. Enthusiastic devotees received the divine Ramakrishna as another puranic Incarnation and for them his birthday has an importance similar to that of Krishna Jayanti, Ramanavami and Buddha Jayanti.

Sri Ramakrishna as a divine symbol has grown in stature and has become a cosmic personality today. Through his chosen instrument, Swami Vivekananda, unlike many other divine personalities he has created an Order which like his shadow is constantly growing. His influence has overflown the boundaries of India. The Ramakrishna Order has about a dozen centres in America which attracts many aspiring souls to his divine personality. Scores of books are published in European countries containing references to Sri Ramakrishna, his teachings and his influence. Some of these books have their source in Academic and intellectual circles. In a recent and revised translation of Dante's *Divine Comedy* there is a new footnote added adducing to the experience of Sri Ramakrishna intending to throw some light on an obscure passage of the great poet. All these circumstances present us evidence to think of Sri Ramakrishna as a growing universal personality.

The *Bhagawata* speaks of a threefold gift given by an Incarnation : an auspicious divine form for devoted souls to contemplate upon ; an exemplary life to guide man across the ocean of ignorance and a body of teachings to enlighten the aspirant's mind. The bewitching beauty of Sri Krishna, the gospel of yoga practised by him and his teachings to Arjuna and Uddhava are points in illustration when we think of Bhagavan Sri Krishna. In the case of Sri Ramakrishna also we have these three points : a personality to contemplate, an exemplary life to imitate and teachings of wisdom to inspire.

Sri Ramakrishna was not an anti-traditionalist. His teachings, one and all, can be traced to our inherited scriptures. What then is his special contribution to the religious world ? There is a well-known aphorism of Narada which states that those God-men who are immersed in the Deity add to the excellence of the scriptures and elevate approved actions to higher levels by their performance.* Sri Ramakrishna has imparted a new vitality to the scriptures by his life in which he has

* सच्छास्त्री कुर्वन्ति शास्त्राणि सुकर्मी कुर्वन्ति कर्माणि।

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implemented divine wisdom which the scriptures teach.

Religions of the world may be distinguished in a two-fold manner basing on the predominance of the ethical note and the emotional tone. Buddhism is a religion which lays all stress upon the ethical perfection of man. That has made this religion one-sided. In its earlier phases there was hardly any provision for the emotional approach. Man cannot live without emotion, and later Buddhism suffered for this want which was compensated by admitting emotion through improper channels. Islam and Christianity during the times of Crusades and Jehads admitted lower emotions in the garb of righteous religion. Purified emotions belong to the core of all great religions. The worth of Christianity lies in this higher form of emotion which has brought redemption to millions. In Hinduism purer and higher forms of emotions have continuously fed temple rituals, religious architecture, and fine arts that are religiously inspired. Today we require equal stress upon purified emotions and an uncorrupted ethical will. In Sri Ramakrishna we find an unparalleled combination of the two.

The early life of Sri Ramakrishna is a saga of tremendous spiritual effort for religious realizations resulting in the purification of his emotions to unattainable levels. The middle part of his life was an example of unusual realizations in several religious channels which enabled him to be a genuine teacher of mankind without posing himself as one. In the last period of his life, to quote his own illustration of the flower, he became a fully blossomed lotus attracting innumerable honey-bees to share all that he had to give. Again it is this emotional purification and strength that helped him to see God in everything and to experience directly that all religions are true and lead to the same goal through different paths.

What is the special message Sri Ramakrishna's life holds for us today? Swami Vivekananda said that Sri Ramakrishna was not a pure soul but that he was purity itself. It is his superhuman purity and God-centred humility that we should specially take note of. The trophies of science are innumerable. Technological advancements have scattered innumerable boons to humanity. But with all these advances we find the ship of humanity as if without a rudder. A parable of Sri Ramakrishna occurs to the mind : A yogi was proud of his achievements. He boasted before a good man about his powers to work miracles. He vaunted himself, saying, 'Look here I can kill this elephant in a moment and revive it in a trice.' Muttering some spells he threw a handful of ashes over the elephant which immediately fell down dead. People were astonished. Again he repeated the process and revived the elephant presently. The good man asked the yogi, 'Well sir, what have *you* gained by this power.' Modern science has increased lethality of its new weapons millions times more. At the same time it has perfected its methods to control innumerable diseases and to bring greater happiness to man. What has humanity gained by this process of increasing debit and credit parallelly. To get out of this vicious circle we have to accept the message of religion, the great sympathy, tenderness and unflinching moral purity which Sri Ramakrishna symbolised.

His teachings were simple. He accepted good and evil but he always pointed out to man his spiritual goal. In the pages of the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* are scattered many illustrations of his pure life. He could not touch the food given by an impure man. He could not receive anything from a person which he himself had stolen from somebody else. He found it impossible to speak to a man who supplemented his earned income by making false bills. Once when 'M' was describing the bad ways of the world to youngsters the Master rebuked him for that and ordered him to tell only ennobling ideas to youngsters. Today we are making frantic efforts to build a better order of society. We have plunged into a vicious circle. Our economic expansion is often at the cost of moral degradation. The medium of communication,

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the press and the radio, are not particularly wedded to truth. Tolerance to truth is dangerously narrowed down in our social transactions. Medium of recreation and enjoyment are fatally contaminated by shocking changes in the values that are created in art. It is at this juncture India and the world need more than ever the example and message of Sri Ramakrishna to draw us out of the morass by his divine sympathy and spiritual guidance.

SWAMI SANKARANANDA

Swami Sankarananda was one of those first few who responded to the clarion call of Swami Vivekananda to renounce the worldly life for a higher and nobler purpose — *atmano mokshartham jagaddhitaya cha*. He joined the monastery at Belur in 1902 and served the Ramakrishna Order for 60 long years with unflinching devotion till he passed away on 13th January, 1962. He was one of the first sannyasin disciples of Swami Brahmananda, the spiritual son of Sri Ramakrishna. Coming in contact with his illustrious life of dedication, thousands of lives have been benefited spiritually.

Amritalal Sen Gupta, — the premonastic name of Swami Sankarananda — was born in Hooghly on Tuesday 9th March, 1880, at 1 a.m. on the Holy Shivaratri night. Nabinkrishna Sen Gupta, his father, was a successful Engineer of his time. Nabinkrishna's truthfulness, integrity, and frankness were of a high order. He never compromised truth and for its sake even resigned his job as a Government Engineer and was contented to serve under the Nawab of Murshidabad. Exigencies of work made him move from place to place, which forced him to leave his boys in his father-in-law's house for the sake of their studies. Satyavati Devi, mother of Amritalal Sen Gupta, was deeply religious and her lofty character left an indelible impress on his life.

Amulya, as he was endearingly called by his maternal uncle, Sarat Chandra Gupta, — who later became known as Swami Sadananda — lost his mother at an early age. He lived with his grandfather Gopal Gupta and studied in the Normal School of Hooghly. After some years he came to Calcutta and studied up to the sixth class. He read for sometime in the Brahmo Boy's School. At this time he cultivated a taste for music also.

He had a sharp memory. His sweet nature, handsome, tall and sturdy features and restraint in talk attracted his classmates towards him. From his boyhood he was of a fearless but grave temperament. He was proficient in many games and sports including swimming.

He studied for some time in the Aryan Institution of Saradacharan Mitra and for some months in the City Collegiate School. Noticing that his studies were being disturbed, his father took him to Murshidabad and admitted him in the Nawab's School. After passing his Entrance Examination creditably, from this school, he studied for two years in the Krishnanath College at Behrampur.

While he was studying in the second year in the College one day he dived into the waters of the Ganga at Murshidabad in order to measure its depth. Unfortunately he struck his head against a submerged rock and was lifted out in an unconscious condition with blood flowing from the wounds. After this accident he used to suffer often from terrible pain in the head. When treatment at Murshidabad failed to cure the ailment he was brought to Calcutta. Several kinds of treatment were tried with no effect, until at last he recovered under Ayurvedic treatment. But even this accident which made him suffer long was not able to cow down his adventurous spirit. When much later, the masons working on Swamiji's temple at Belur Math feared to climb to the top of the tower to fix the trident he without hesitation climbed to the top and fixed it with his own hands. But in the year

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of the accident he was not able to appear in the F.A. examination. However next year he passed from the General Assembly College and joined the Medical College. But he was not destined to read beyond the third year. For by this time Swami Sadananda had come to the Baranagore Monastery and Amulya met him often. The latter's devotion to his Guru Swami Vivekananda captured the imagination of the youth and attracted him to the thought-current set in motion by Swami Vivekananda. He heard Swami Vivekananda's lectures on the latter's return from the West and was still more drawn to the life of renunciation.

Some years later when the Math was shifted to Belur, Amulya had gone to the Math. There he met Swami Sadananda, who took him to Swami Brahmananda. Swami Brahmananda was at that time sitting on the verandah of the first floor. When Amulya prostrated at his feet, Swami Brahmananda held the youth's palm in his own, to weigh as it were and said, 'Yes, you will achieve.' While they were conversing Amulya saw Swami Vivekananda coming down from the second floor and going towards the library. In passing them Swamiji stopped and looked at the strong and well-built youth for some time.

The urge for renunciation in him had been gaining momentum slowly but silently. It was on the Kali Puja night of 1902 that he finally renounced. He was then living at his maternal uncle's house in Shanti Ghosh Street. Saying that he was going for taking bath in the holy river he left home, crossed the Ganga and went by walk and by train to a distant village to be away from home. After living in hiding for sometime he joined the Belur Math in 1902. During the first week of December of 1902 he went to Madras along with Swami Sadananda and Sister Nivedita.

In the holy company of Swami Ramakrishnananda in Madras Brahmachari Amulya's time was spent in great spiritual bliss. Sashi Maharaj, was at that time writing a life of Sri Ramanuja for which reference to a Sanskrit book written in Telugu script was found inevitable. Amulya learnt the Telugu script within a very short time and helped Sashi Maharaj in his writing. Soon, however, he sailed on a tour to Japan and China along with Swami Sadananda and returned after a stay of six months in Japan. He travelled widely with Swami Sadananda and Sister Nivedita to places of historical and religious importance in North India towards the beginning of 1904.

But Swami Brahmanandaji's illness in 1904 brought Amulya into closer contact with his Guru. He undertook to serve and nurse Swami Brahmananda during this illness. Swami Brahmananda was so pleased by the devoted attention and service that he expressed his intention of initiating Amulya Maharaj into sannyasa and accordingly in the year 1906 at the time of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday initiated him into Sannyasa. This was the first initiation into sannyasa after the passing away of Swami Vivekananda. Amulya Maharaj was given the name of Swami Sankarananda.

Even from the beginning he adhered to the exact truth. In 1904 he heard that his father was on his death bed at Murshidabad. Under the advice of Swami Brahmananda he went to see his father but on the promised day he returned to the Math though his father was seriously ill. To the father's query whether he would go away leaving him in such a condition his calm reply was : 'I have to go for I have given my word.' Such was the adherence to truth that he practised.

His devotion to duty irrespective of the situation in which he was placed was exemplary. In the winter of 1904 an epidemic of plague broke out in Bhagalpur in Bihar. Swami Sankarananda with Swami Sadananda served the suffering human beings at the risk of their lives. During the Chilka relief in Orissa Sankaranandaji Maharaj worked under Khoka Maharaj (Swami Subodhananda) with great dexterity and tenacity in spite of his own illness. In August 1906 during the floods in Noakhali district of East Bengal Swami Sankarananda and another Sadhu were sent to provide relief for the afflicted. Surrounded

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on all sides by water they lived in boats sustaining themselves on flattened rice for more than a month. Nights they spent in the verandah of the Railway station, or in the empty goods wagons. Yet they never swerved from duty.

Amulya Maharaj was blessed to serve his Guru to the Guru's entire satisfaction, in the capacity of private secretary from 1909 continuously for about eleven years. Amulya Mararaj became the object of Swami Brahmananda's special affection. Swami Brahmananda had great confidence in and love for Amulya Maharaj and the latter had high regard and deep reverence for his Guru. The Guru's words were as a command from on High. Once when the physician had prescribed some milk injection for Amulya Maharaj's ailment Swami Brahmananda had disapproved of it. For the rest of his life he never took injections however much he had to suffer. He refused to go to America because he was required to take some inoculations, which meant going against the Guru's injunctions.

He travelled in the company of Swami Brahmanandaji to many places in the North as well as in South India. In 1917 while staying at Puri, Swami Brahmanandaji experiencing the great spiritual atmosphere extant in Bhubaneswar wished to have a Math there. He deputed Swami Sankarananda to choose a site for the purpose. Pleased with the selection of the plot Swami Brahmananda entrusted him with the work of construction of the Math there.

Many were the difficult situations that Amulya Maharaj had to face in its construction. The site was situated in the woods, habited by tigers; material for construction was not available on the spot, yet undaunted by these and other difficulties and with great steadiness of resolve he carried out the wish of his Guru. The beautiful and spacious Math centre was opened on the 31st October, 1919 by Swami Brahmananda.

The responsibility of the construction of many important buildings was entrusted to him of which the Temples of Holy Mother, and Swami Brahmananda in Belur Math are but a few examples.

Whenever he was free he would go on pilgrimage in spite of the untold sufferings and dangers it involved. Living in the holy places he not only imbibed their sanctity but by a historical insight traced the cultural progress of India. Banaras, Bhubaneswar and Puri were places dear to his heart. He used to visit daily the Viswanath temple early in the mornings while in Banaras and while in Puri he went for the *darshan* of Lord Jagannath daily very early in the morning.

His love and regard for the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna was very great. In 1927 Swami Saradanandaji was taken ill with apoplexy, at the Udbodhan Office in Calcutta. When news reached him at Puri the train services were discontinued due to floods. Yet he and Swami Akshayananda at the risk of their lives determinedly waded through the flooded tracts, crossed rivers on broken bridges and at last reached Calcutta to be at the bedside of Swami Saradananda during his last moments. He went to Allahabad during the last illness of Swami Vijnanananandaji and had him treated under Homoeopathy. Having lived with most of the sannyasin disciples of Sri Ramakrishna and having earned their great love he was fully imbued with the ideals of Ramakrishna Vivekananda.

He had a great admiration for Hindu culture. When he visited Rangoon in 1924 along with Swami Bodhananda, he addressed a gathering on the lofty ideals of Indian culture which left a great impression on the audience. He was silent by nature and avoided limelight. Yet when duty demanded he never lagged behind to speak out and place before the audience the ideals of the Mission.

An instance that occurred in Banaras shows how much even the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna liked him. Once Amulya Maharaj was at Banaras. Swami Vijnanananda had come there to take an image of Mother Kali. One day Swami Vijnanananda called him and making him sit on a chair sat

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looking at him. After some time tears flowed from his eyes. Swami Sankarananda speaking about this incident said: 'He said, "I felt happy". What did he see and what happiness he felt I do not know. I have concluded that because of my association with Raja Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda) he behaved towards me in that manner.'

He was elected as the youngest trustee of the Order and a member of the first Working Committee in 1910. Of the two executors of his will appointed by Swami Saradananda Amulya Maharaj was one. In 1929, he was appointed one of the assistant Secretaries of the Ramakrishna Mission. Prior to this he was for some time President of Bhubaneswar and Delhi centres. In 1938 he was elected Treasurer and in 1947 Vice-President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission.

On the passing away of Swami Virajananda on 30th May, 1951 Swami Sankarananda was elected President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission on the 19th June of that year. He executed this heavy responsibility admirably for more than ten years.

Some glorious events in the history of the Math and Mission took place during these ten years. A concrete shape to Swamiji's idea of Women's Math, was given by ordaining into sannyasa some competent women in 1953 and by registering the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission in May 1961 as a separate body. By the opening of a Training Centre for the novices on 13th May, 1956 Swami Sankarananda fulfilled one more desire of Swami Vivekananda, viz., training the sadhus of Belur Math to mould their lives according to the ideals lived by Sri Ramakrishna. The Centenary of Holy Mother was celebrated during this time. He inaugurated the celebrations at the Belur Math and gave two inspiring speeches one on the A.I.R., Calcutta and the other at the Mahila Sammelan at the University Institute Hall.

After accepting the presidentship of the Order he started initiating religious seekers. He had also to travel throughout the country fulfilling various functions at the different centres of the Order.

The main characteristics of his life were his unostentatiousness, and simple and austere living. Even after becoming the President of the Order there was not seen in him at any time the slightest deviation from this high ideal. He did not accept for his own use anything more than was ordinarily necessary according to his strict standard. The economy he practised in all matters is an example for a sannyasin. Every bit of garment that he used was well utilised. The spectacles that were purchased many years ago were not discarded. Even when the doctors advised otherwise he simply answered, 'When it is serving the purpose what is the necessity to go in for another?' If, however, he felt extreme difficulty in reading he would use a magnifying glass.

In April 1940 while living at Bhubaneswar he suffered from herpes on the back. He was immediately brought to Calcutta but as there was no good treatment for this disease at that time he had to silently suffer intense pain for about two months. Owing to this disease some nerves of his body were permanently damaged and made him suffer all through the rest of his life. He passed through many dangers unscathed, it may be said by the grace of his Guru. Relating these incidents he would say, 'I do not fear anything.' The truth of this statement was observed till the last in his life.

Just before his final exit from this world on 11th January at 11 o'clock in the night he was seen to remark as if he was a little agitated, 'Do you know, I am a patient.' During the last few years his body had become weak, yet with the spirit of self-reliance he avoided taking other's help unless it was absolutely essential. Many times he fell down in his attempt to get up and walk without asking for anyone's help. Even in that state he attempted on his own to rise up. The attendant was moved by seeing Maharaj in that condition but he was calm, and collected,

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—he simply asked to be lifted up as if nothing had happened.

He was very brief and to the point in his talks. He used to listen to the problems of the disciples with great patience and solve them in a few words. But talking at great length and unnecessarily was against his very grain. Some misunderstood this attitude of his. But he was indifferent to praise or blame of the people. However, those who came in close contact with him were charmed by his heart-felt sympathy, liberal ideas, and sincere feeling for others. Those who had the opportunity to work with him said that whenever approached for help in any work he helped them to the best of his capacity.

He was a most practical person. In the field of work emotions could never upset his discriminating faculty. Though he looked stern, he loved the sadhus and brahmacharins. He was a master of several arts and crafts like carpentry, gardening, mechanics, cooking and bookbinding.

In spite of all his works the main string of his life was in tune with the ideal of Sannyasa as set by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. A strictly regulated life had given a solid support to his nature. Even in the midst of innumerable works he was never seen to deviate from his daily routine of japa and meditation and this routine he maintained till a few days before his end.

Reading books on various subjects was an old habit of his. Puranas, scriptures and stotras were most dear to him. A part of the selections from the scriptures which he had noted for his own personal use has been recently published in the name *Ratnamala* (Garland of Jewels) in Bengali. He was like a reliable encyclopaedia about quotations or incidents from the Puranas. Like the Gita, Bible was also his object of respect. He retained his sharp memory even to the closing days of his life to the surprise of all.

He took keen interest in the collection and publication of the original materials about the Order. Most of the material for the books published on Swami Brahmanandaji was to a large extent supplied by him. Even while discharging the onerous responsibilities as President of the Order he for a long time with great labour personally collected and preserved them.

Even to the last day of his earthly existence physicians did not find any disease in his system except debility due to old age.

In 1955 during his illness he was prohibited by the physicians to sit but when they had left he said, 'Doctors frighten like this.' He was found often to repeat 'Dependence is misery, happiness depends on self-reliance'. *Sarvam paravasham duhkham sarvam atmavasham sukham.* During the last few years, ever self-reliant person that he was, he was forced to depend upon others. He always tried to do everything on his own but was not able, the long persisting pain due to herpes also troubled him day and night. Last few months of his life he was heard to say, 'Why the Lord has still kept me He only knows. There is no other go but to depend on His will. Everything should be silently borne.'

He continued his spiritual ministry of initiating religious seekers upto 15th November, 61, granted darshan upto the 10th January 62 sitting. On the 11th some phlegm was noticed and on the 12th morning slight fever developed which later on increased. Though after evening insensibility set in he was conscious till the end. None of the attendants could surmise that, that was the last night. On the 13th January at 2-30 a.m. all at once the respiration failed but still the heart beat continued. The end came at 3-10 a.m. and his soul merged in the all-pervading soul of Sri Ramakrishna.

His life is an exemplar to all good souls who aspire to live the higher spiritual life.

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SRI SANKARACHARYA AND KRISHNA BHAKTI

TRIVEDI KRISHNAJI

Renowned as the greatest philosopher and Teacher of the Advaita or non-dualistic Vedanta, Sri Sankaracharya is no less great as a religious reformer and devotee of God. In his unique personality, we find a happy blend of a philosopher and a poet, a mystic and a missionary, a religious reformer and an ardent devotee. Sister Nivedita speaks of Sankaracharya thus :

> 'We contemplate with wonder and delight the devoton of St. Francis of Assisi, the intellect of Abellard, the virile force and freedom of Martin Luther, and the political efficiency of Ignatious Loyola ; but who could imagine all these united in one person.'

The Advaita Philosophy of Sankara is non-sectarian, universal in its appeal and sweep, bold in its declaration of the divinity of man, constituting as it is the unity of the whole world and of mankind. Swami Vivekananda declares :

> 'Advaita is the last word of religion and thought and the only position from which one can look upon all religions and sects with love.' *

Advaita philosophy is based on *Brahma vâda,* rests on the way of life, and experience, or *anubhava.* Dr. R. D. Ranade refers, in his Gita lectures, to the German philosopher Kant, ultimately coming in line with the Advaitic thought :

> 'Kant had rethought his philosophy of categorical Imperative and found himself in agreement with Advaita stating, I, as Man, am Myself, This Being.'

Philosophy lives in the religious life of the people of India. Sankara was born at a time when the religious climate in India was arid with rank ritualism forsaking God, heterodox religions denying God, and several sectarian creeds with gruesome practices making God look an abhorrent principle. Sankara was born with a mission to fulfil. He had to meet the challenge of the times. As a practical reformer, he did not condemn any faith but prescribed a better way. In his religious scheme, *nishkâma karma,* devotion (Bhakti) and Jnana, all have a place. He recognised the innate tendencies, intellectual levels of the people (*adhikâri bheda*) and provided for the spiritual life of all. He formulated an eclectic form of worship of Devi, Siva, Vishnu, Ganapathi, and Surya, called *Panchâyatana Puja* and he is known as the *Shan Maṭha sthâpanâcharya.* Sankara as a philosopher gave a universal system of thought and as a reformer, he had shown a better way of worship with a fresh direction and impetus to the devotional life. As a reformer he had to take a pragmatic view and meet the religious needs of the public. He revitalised the Hindu religion without compromising his philosophy.

Some people who take Jnana alone or Bhakti alone, charge Sankara with inconsistency in his teachings. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa combines in himself the wisdom of the sage, the ardent devotion of a Bhakta with a universal vision of the unity of all faiths. Dr. Radhakrishnan pays his tribute to Sankara thus, 'there have been few minds more universal than his,' and also remarks that 'the life of Sankara makes a strong impression of contraries.' If we take note of Sankara's achievements as a whole, philosopher, reformer, mystic, missionary etc., we meet with several facets enhancing the lustre of his unique personality. Sankara travelled all over India, at least three times, from Badri to Rameswar renovating and consecrating several temples and shrines, offering his impassioned hymns and prayers at each shrine of Siva, Devi, Vishnu, Ganapathi, etc., as

* *Complete works of Swami Vivekananda* Vol. VI. P. 375. Fourth Edition.

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various forms of the one Reality. He established Mutts in the four corners of India and by practice and precept, he inspired and influenced the religious life of India. Love and tolerance contributed to his success. Some people charge his adherents with arrogance for repeating the *maha vâkya* '*Aham Brahmâsmi*'. J. Rumi says :

> '"I am God" is an expression of great humility ; one who says that I am slave of God affirms two existences. He is All and there is no Being but God.'

Saranâgati and *prapatti* too aim at the effacement of ego for a life in God or towards God. Arthur Avalon remarks :

> 'Although Sri Sankara as a philosopher postulated Brahmavada or Absolutism, that God alone is Real, as a religious Reformer, he did not condemn any religion or philosophy or deprive the practice of rituals or devotion. He had taken into consideration the temperament and limitations of mankind, *adhikari bheda* and allowed rituals and devotional practices as aids to mental purity paving the way for Jnana or Enlightenment.'

Sankara extols Bhakti or devotion as a great help in spiritual life. He reiterates in *Vivekachudamani* the saying of the *Narada Bhakti Sutra* (81) '*Bhakti reva gariyasi*'. The soul thrilling devotional hymns addressed by him to the various forms of God form part of the spiritual heritage of India repeated by devotees in every shrine to this day. He is a devotee *par excellence*. To Sankara all forms of God are worthy of adoration and worship. To focalize devotion, one may prefer one form of God as Ishta. Madhusudan Saraswati exclaims that he knows no Reality but Krishna. '*Krishnât param Tatvam aham na jâne.*' Appayya Dikshitar's devotion flows towards Siva, '*Tarunendu Sekhara*'. Sri Sankara prefers Lord Krishna as his Kula Deva.

Sankara's initial composition was the commentary on *Vishnu Sahasranama*. He sang as many hymns on Vishnu as he sang on Siva. But Lord Krishna attracted him strongly. Sankara says :

asmâkam jayati kula devo yadu patih.[1]
(*Prabodha sudhakara.* v. 243)

Sankara sitting by the side of his ailing mother Āryamba offers his prayers to Lord Krishna to make his appearance (*sakshâtkâra*) before his mother : '*saranyo lokeso mama bhavatu Krishno akshi vishayah,*'[2] and Krishna appeared and blessed Āryamba and we have Krishna's temple at Kaladi a few yards from his mother's house. Sankara extols ecstatically,

'*kandarpa koti subhagam. vânchita phaladam dayârnavam Krishnam tyaktva kim anya vishayam netra yugam drastumutsahate.*'[3]

Like a true Devotee, Sankara expresses viraha and concern saying life is wasted without hearing the glories of God.

'*yadupati kathâ viyoge vyartham gatam ayur iti chintâ.*'
—(*Prabodha Sudhakara.* v. 174)

He sings in Manasa Puja :

'*sadâ sevyah krishnah sajala ghana nilah karatale dadhane dadhynnam.*'[4]

Sankara contemplates on Krishna's *bala lila* eating with his mates. He says it as *Dhyana vidhi* :

'*yamunâ tata nikata sthita brindâvana kânane mahâ ramye kalpadrumatala bhumou charanam charanopari sthâpya tishṭantam ghana nilam swatejasâ bhâsayantam iha viśvam*

* * *

[1] Victory unto our family Deity the Lord of the Yadus.

[2] Let Krishna, who is the shelter, and the Lord of the Universe appear before me.

[3] What else will the eyes desire to see leaving Sri Krishna who is of the beauty of a hundred million Kamas (gods of love), who bestows unto us whatever we desire, and who is an ocean of compassion.

[4] Krishna, of the colour of the deep dark clouds and holding a lump of curd-rice in his palm is always to be meditated upon, and loved.

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bhunjânam saha gopai kunjaantaravartinam harim smarata' [5]

(*P. Sudhakara.* 184-188)

The above verses have close resemblance with the verse in Bhagavata X. 13. 11. Sankara, the dynamic missionary and reformer, expresses his inner longing and desire while sitting on the bank of the Ganges and offering his prayer to Mother Ganges :

'Bhagavati tava tire nira matraśanoham vigata vishaya trishnah krishnam arâdhayami.'

Oh Goddess Ganges ; bless me so that I may sit on thy bank taking only your water, free from desires, and worship Lord Krishna. Sankara inculcates : *'geyam gita, nâma sahasram dhyeyam sripati rupamajasram'* [6] (*Mohamudgara*).

Commenting on Gita, cha. 18-65 Sankara says, *'bhagavat charanaika parayano bhaved.'* [7]

Though Sankara is great as a devotee of God, that aspect of his personality is not so well known for some reasons. Arthur Avalon remarks :

> 'Sri Sankaracharya was the incarnation of devotion, *bhaktavatara* as well as a great philosopher ; a fact which is sometimes ignored by those who do not wish to be reminded that he, whose speculative genious they extol, was also the protaganist of the so-called idolatrous Hinduism.'
>
> (Preface to *Hymns to Goddess*)

Another reason seems to be that the followers of the theistic schools that came after Sankara deliberately belittled him charging him as an atheist, *'pracchanna Bauddha'*, and *Mayavadi.* Sankara is the greatest *Brahmavâdi.* God intoxicated persons like Eckhart, J. Boehme, Spinoza and many others were branded as atheists. In fact Sankara has preserved the devotional life of India by renovating and consecrating several shrines throughout India arranging due worship at Badri, Kedar etc.

Great as a philosopher and poet, reformer and missionary, Sankaracharya ranks as one of the greatest devotees of Sri Krishna. Sankara is so unique in his personality and accomplishments that we revere him as Divine. He not only left a rich legacy in the cultural and spiritual heritage of India, but his Personality and achievements form the greatest unifying force, in the social and spiritual life of India.

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[5] Meditate on him who in the beautiful woods of Brindavana — situated near the bank of Yamuna — is standing with one foot on another under the wish-fulfilling tree, is of blue complexion, is illumining the whole universe by His effulgence, * * * as also that Hari who with the gopa boys is having His repast inside the groves.

[6] The Gita and the thousand names of the Lord are to be sung, and the Lord's form is to be meditated upon continuously and for ever.

[7] One should be devoted to the feet of the Lord alone.

There is a little difference in opinion between the teachers of Knowledge and those of Love, though both admit the power of Bhakti. The Jnanins hold Bhakti to be an instrument of liberation, the Bhaktas look upon it both as the instrument and the thing to be attained. To my mind this is a distinction without much difference. In fact, Bhakti, when used as an instrument, really means a lower form of worship, and the higher form becomes inseparable from the lower form of realization at a later stage. Each seems to lay a great stress upon his own peculiar method of worship, forgetting that with perfect love, true knowledge is bound to come even unsought, and that from perfect knowledge, true love is inseparable.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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THE INEVITABLE CHOICE

SWAMI SIDDHINATHANANDA

"Man is a wingless biped" said a wise man. We may view him also as a quadruped whose fore-legs have been transformed into hands. He is a unique animal in that he alone moves about with his head erect. For the rest of the creation, the head and the stomach are on the same level. According to the evolutionists, man is a monkey minus the tail; according to the religionists, the human body is a medium through which a certain soul works out its past impressions. Whatever be the origin of the biped, he has many things in common with the quadrupeds. Even a centenarian is loathe to get out of his body. Every being is very much attached to its body. All beings are busy day and night in satisfying the needs and demands of their bodies. The primary need of an animal is food. Nature has given to animals another appetite, the urge of sex, as a device for the continuation of the species. The more evolved animals, who have all their five senses well developed, are not satisfied with food and sex alone. They want satisfaction for all their senses; they seek fine sights, melodious tunes, sweet tastes, pleasant scents etc. In beings other than the homo-sapiens, all these five are not equally developed. Some are strong in sight, others in hearing, some others in smelling and so on. In man all are well developed and strong

When the percept is agreeable to the senses, we call it happiness; when it is disagreeable, it is called misery. Of the five senses, those of touch and taste are the primary. Sex and food are the gross forms of these two. All the sub-human beings, children and the undeveloped human beings are all satisfied with a life of sense gratification. There is a curious character in the *Ramayana* called Kabandha. That torso has his head inside his pouch. There is many a man to whom the stomach is all-important. Many such, with their vaunted pride of being intelligent beings, have tried to prove that man is no better than an animal, that his life is limited by the senses. "We are sure of today; who can predict about the morrow? May be, we shall be consigned to the flames or buried beneath the earth tomorrow. There is no knowing as to what is beyond the grave. So it will be the height of folly not to make the best of the certain present. So let us eat, drink, laugh and play." This is the way some like to look at life. Is such a course possible? Yes, they assert. Aren't we seeing with our own eyes that the major portion of mankind is doing likewise? And many have tried it. But—for how long? Children play with dolls. Can the grown-ups indulge in that? Unbridled sense-indulgence brings about disease and decay. Too much sweet satiates one soon. Enjoyment ends in ailment. The senses become dull and devoid of vigour. Then again, what is it that we consider as happiness? It is a prospective anxiety and a retrospective regret with a concurrent excitement. Very often the result may be just the reverse of what we had hoped for. So the wise consider all sensation painful.

> 'The body has become decrepit, gait is unsteady; teeth have bidden adieu; sight is lost, hearing is hard, mouth is leaky; the relatives do not pay any heed to what he says; the wife cares not to nurse him; even the sons have turned against him — what a pity! This is the fate of the aged man,'

so sang an ancient poet.

> 'We enjoyed not; we have been consumed by enjoyment; no penance was performed, but there was no dearth of ordeals in our lives; time has not been overcome, time has only devoured us. Desire has not been reduced; we have been reduced. Face has become wrinkled; the hairs on the head have become silvery. The limbs have become ricketty; desire alone is getting rejuvenated',

declared Bhartrihari.

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Yayati of epic fame tried the epicurean way of life even borrowing the youthfulness of his son. But finally he had to cry out :

> 'All the wealth, women, kine and grain of the earth are not enough to satisfy the greed of a single man. Therefore, O Man, give up greed. Desire can never be quenched through enjoyment. It is only pouring petrol into the flames.'

Verily, the world is evanescent and miserable, was the conclusion of the thoughtful man. So, enjoyment cannot be the goal of man.

Then, what about wealth? Wealth serves two purposes. The first is that it is the means of enjoyment for oneself. It being the means of enjoyment for others as well, the possessor thereof can exert control over them. Thus wealth contributes to one's own enjoyment and is a source of power over others. Of these, enjoyment — the end that wealth serves — cannot be our goal; we have already seen that. The feeling of being rich confers some sort of satisfaction to the rich man. That is the reason why, man goes on hoarding wealth even after he has acquired enough for a normal decent life. So, can it not be considered an end worthwhile? Man goes to any length to earn money. He will cross the seven seas or penetrate the densest forests to get at wealth. He will even risk his life for the sake of money. But then, is it a sign of wisdom to seek riches risking one's very life?

What about those who inherit fortunes from their parents? They toil not to earn it. Well, do they sleep well? They are mortally afraid of the robber, the thief, the beggars, the rulers, and the taxes. They are not willing to spend it for their own needs. They sleep not well. *Arthasya dasa vayam.* 'We are the slaves of wealth' declared even the wise Bhishma once. Such is the lure and grip of lucre over man. None can hoard a lot of this stuff through fair means. All money is stained. There is no limit to greed. Deceit, competition, rage, estrangement, quarrel, and hatred are some of the products of wealth. A wise man once called it a 'murderer'. Can this 'murderer' be made the end and aim of life?

Now, how about the power over others which money confers on its owner? So long as one has power to distribute patronage, there will be people to respect and respond and do one's bidding. If one is favoured in preference to another, the latter will start abusing. Then again, there will be competition from other men of power. And if the power is misused or abused — it is in the nature of power to be so used — there is danger of opposition and loss of power, if not of life itself. So, this corrupting incubus also cannot be the be-all and end-all of life.

Fame is another goal which many run after. There is a saying that for every year of renown among the humans, a thousand years of happiness in heaven is assured. But, can everybody be equally famous? It is very fickle. If we search the pages of history, we can see that even the names of one-time famous men have been forgotten by posterity. Rightly has it been characterised as an infirmity. Besides, fame seems covetable only till it is acquired. Once it is achieved, all quiet and composure is lost. You are, from then on, at the mercy of the mob. A thoughtful man will not pursue fame as a worthy end in itself, though it may follow him.

The ends we have so far considered and found wanting have oneself as the centre. Now let us shift the centre outside oneself and consider such worthy pursuits as social service, patriotism, philanthropic activities etc. Undoubtedly, unselfish activities are very laudable. They conduce to the betterment of oneself as well as that of others. When every being lives only for himself, to live for the sake of others is very noble. In very truth, unselfishness it is, that keeps up the social order.

> द्वयक्षरं हि भवेन्मृत्युः त्र्यक्षरं ब्रह्म शाश्वतं ।
> ममेति हि भवेन्मृत्युः न ममेति ब्रह्म शाश्वतम् ॥

"The two-lettered मम 'Mine' is death, and the three-letter word न मम 'Not mine' is Brahman eternal," says Vyasa. So rare is unselfishness. Service rendered to one's community or country is really very praiseworthy.

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But the satisfaction that the agent gets therefrom is not constant. It may give some satisfaction for a time; but as time passes, it also will be found wanting. The reason is that it is limited, is relative. True, we have certain duties by the society that brings us up. But we have certain obligations unto ourselves. When we prepare the balance sheet after discharging our debts to others, often we find a lot of deficit on our side. *Dharma* bestows the twofold fruit of success in this world and enjoyment in the other. Our need is great. The satisfaction that the worldly success supplies when compared to our need is indeed trifling. There cannot be true happiness from trifles. The other fruit of *Dharma,* viz., enjoyment in the other world, also is transitory and limited. All fruits decay after some days. Hence that too cannot be the final goal of life.

In search of happiness we went round the world; sought after wealth as a means thereunto; even risked our life to attain happiness; did many things thinking that they would give us happiness. But the results have turned out to be the reverse of what we had expected. The man over-powered by lust knows no happiness. The greedy man is not satisfied even if he gains possession of the whole world. Lust and lucre eat up a man on the one hand and drive him mad on the other. So, *Dharma, Artha* and *Kama* cannot give man everlasting happiness; for they are based on desire.

The general notion that Hinduism discards these three ends of life is not correct. It only says that a thoughtful man cannot make these the *summum bonum* of his life. They have their place. How far? *Kâmo jiveta yâvata.* As much as they are essential to maintain life and in such a way that they do not harm other beings. Acquisition of wealth through correct means and enjoyment of sex for the sake of progeny have been sanctioned. They are natural instincts. But the scriptures are interested in controlling the natural instincts and not in sanctioning or promoting them. The third is the field of action, wherein the struggle for existence of the evolutionists hold sway.

Now, if these are not satisfactory, what is the way out? There is no happiness in the finite. The infinite alone affords infinite happiness. That is why the Lord asks us in the *Gita* to worship Him as this world is fleeting and miserable. How to worship God? 'Through renunciation some attained immortality,' say the *Upanishads.* So we have to beat a retreat and renuounce. Renounce what? That which we consider ours most. What is it? The body. How to give it up? By realising that it is not our property.

Once, may be when he was having a bad tooth-ache, Vyasa set up an enquiry into the ownership of his tenement. To whom does the body belong? To the parents? They alone cannot produce the body as we see from a good many issueless couples. Is it one's own? Impossible. Does it belong to the wife? She will claim it only so long as it serves her. To the employer? Certainly not. To the fire? Perhaps. No, say some others. The dog and the vulture also put forth their claims. We don't like the idea that our beloved body should be claimed by these creatures. Does it belong to the Self? The Self has nothing to do with the flesh. To the friends? So long as you have money in your pocket. Well, no definite reply can be given to this vexed question. So it is impossible to find out the real owner of the physique. We are claiming as ours a property which is a bone of contention among so many. Only one thing is sure, that it is not ours.

When the body itself is others' property, what to say of its offspring? And of the materials gathered for their sake? When the sense of ownership over wealth, progeny and body disappears, man comes to his own; he realises his real nature. Then the real Owner is known. 'Everything in this universe is pursued by fear; renunciation alone is the real refuge.' Only when the man is crucified does the Divine in man get resurrected. When one realises the decay and death of things material, when one ceases to delight in them through constant discrimination and detachment and fixes one's mind firmly on the Self, then one

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has rightly fixed one's goal of life ; for therein is life eternal and peace everlasting. The Kauravas and their cousins, the Pandavas, went to war against each other for the possession of the kingdom. And both the parties were utterly destroyed. There arose a dispute regarding the claim to the throne of Ayodhya between Rama and his younger brother Bharata. But in their case, each was claiming it his right and privilege to surrender power to the other, and we had the glorious rule of Rama, Ramarajya. Well, that is the secret of true happiness and good-will among men — Renunciation of self.

So, the only true goal of a thinking man can be this attainment of the true Self of man. For that, the lower self has to be subdued. As the alternative, it may be surrendered to the Divine. The latter is considered the easier, because it is natural. We have to offer our heart to its true Owner and render Him loving service. When the Divine takes possession of the heart, all darkness is destroyed, all the knots of the heart are rent and the Self realises its own pure blissful being. 'If there is a God, what do all these matter? And if there is no God, after all, what do all these matter?' So spake a Roman Rajarshi.

ADVENT OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

BR. SUDHANGSU

The advent of God is variously described in the different Shastras of the various religions. Hinduism specially speaks of this with a good deal of emphasis, conviction and faith. The belief in this regard goes so far amongst the Hindus that they hold that God comes to serve the great cause of humanity, viz. redemption of mankind, not once or twice, but times without number. Whenever occasion demands God out of His infinite compassion manifests Himself for this purpose.

This coming or advent of God is not merely a human anticipation or apprehension due to man's feeling of insignificance before the huge cosmic process, sublime and awful. Neither is it a suggestion or refuge dictated by the self-preserving instinct inherent in the biology of man, nor a self-supporting fancy (imagination) or consolation of his queer psychological make-up. It is a knowledge proved by the facts of history and tested and reflected upon by the seekers of truth, both intellectually and intuitively. Surely, it is not a sheer dogma of fanatic belief. In fact there are numerous instances of such incarnations or God-lives in the history of religion. Science cannot satisfactorily explain the advent of these God-men and their great mission here in this world.

The role of these God-men can be well studied with reference to their place, time, situation as also in a far greater context of world history and humanity. The immediate place, time, and situation in which the advent of Sri Ramakrishna took place has a deep significance. His advent was in the second quarter of the 19th century, when the moderners were already out to challenge the traditions of the Hindu religion and society. Everything ancient was considered supersitious and fit to be discarded like used and worn out garment. This was a most critical period for the Hindus. Weakened by long political subjugation under the Muslim and British rules the Hindus were losing confidence in their own religion. Fortunately, a few great men had still energy left to check this degeneration with some kind of immediate reformation. They could however appreciate the better side of the Western education, science and industry. Thus a reformation was started in different fields, social, cultural, religious and educational, under the leadership of Ram Mohan Roy, the pioneer of this movement.

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But the effects of this reformation in the field of religion were otherwise. Religion which was the last refuge of the Hindus was attacked by the moderners. The hoary traditions of the Hindu religion were challenged, misinterpreted and confused in the milieu of this reformation. The main target of the movement was Hindu idolatry and as it was a movement within the Hindu fold it tended to create more confusion than help to the laity.

So just at this critical juncture, when the Hindus were going to lose their moorings in their Eternal religion, when Western materialistic culture was tempting the people to forget their own hoary traditions, when the dark cloud of scholastic pessimism almost covered up the flame of faith amongst the Hindus, God manifested Himself as Sri Ramakrishna. To quote the language of his great disciple Swami Vivekananda : 'It was while this movement of reform was being inaugurated in India, that a child was born of a poor Brahmin family on the 18th February, 1836, in one of the remote villages of Bengal.'

This time the incarnation was not similar to that of Sri Krishna who came in response to the earnest prayer of Mother Earth to destroy Kamsa. This time he was not in the role of Rama who killed Ravana. But in the very humble role of a poor villager, officiating as an humble priest, in the temple of Bhavatarini, the Divine Mother, built by the pious lady Rani Rasmani, at Dakshineswar.

The immediate mission of this Avatara has been very rightly understood and expressed by Swami Nirvedananda, who wrote : 'But miraculously enough the Hindu society escaped the impending danger. The stubborn and the apparently foolhardy stand of the orthodox masses did not end in a hopeless fiasco. The orthodox society had not to wait long when a phenomenon of paramount importance took place to infuse enormous strength into the entire range of Hindu convictions and thus to bring about a complete renaissance of Hindu Religion.'

Sri Ramakrishna stood amidst these reformists bridging up the gap between the people of the new generation and old India and her great spiritual tradition, holding up his own life before them as a veritable monument of that faith. His mighty faith stood like an unbreakable rock, as an invulnerable bulwark against the ravaging breakers of exotic culture. He went to many of these reformists and most humbly approached them to convey what he actually meant by Hindu religion. He demonstrated before them the highest experience in life. He convinced them that religion is not social reform. He challenged with his own realization the debating spirit of the New age and brought home to them the real faith dormant in Hindu idol-worship and its actual significance.

He proved the liberal ideas of the Hindus about caste, creed, and religion by accepting all within his heart. Mohammed, Christ and Buddha, he recognised as the incarnations and prophets and respected them equally as ideal path-finders of religion. He loved them and worshipped them, as God manifest. This was a novel thing for the moderners for they had not properly understood, the universal spirit of Hinduism. To prove the great principle 'that truth is one but sages call it differently', he became in his single life a Mohammedan, a Christian, a Vaishnava, a Sākta and an Advaitin. The people were taken aback in noticing this unequivocal experience in religious life, and the resultant liberality in outlook and broadness of vision. They marked also the great compassion of the Avatara for the poor and distressed, whom he looked upon as 'Siva'. His approach towards religion was a unique development along the line of Sri Krishna Chaitanya who preceded him. This message of Sri Ramakrishna has become a source of inspiration to many to serve the noble cause of suffering humanity as a mode of *sadhana* — worship of God.

Besides this fulfilment of the immediate mission of his life, Sri Ramakrishna had a greater mission in this world. His message to the aspirants was that the aim of human life is God realization and not any other thing : not philanthropy, nor humanism, nor rationa-

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lism. He was very categorical and uncompromising as to this only purpose of man's life.

People began coming drawn to his ideals and he too drew them near by the charm of his infinite love. Some of them were so impressed and inspired that they left their hearth, home, and other ambitions in life to seek God, in the traditional Hindu way by taking to Sannyasa. They believed with their Master that God realization is the only purpose of life or the highest destiny of mankind. They achieved in their life this highest ideal and through them and their successors, hundreds and thousands of aspirants have been seeking Truth today all over the world. But by this he did not prohibit the idea of 'welfare' altogether. On the contrary he lived and suggested a spiritual humanism and cultivation of a vision to see the divine in the human. All his teachings were based on the ideal of Vedantic universalism which should not however be confused with pantheism.

Thus almost unlike the other cases of incarnations, the great role of his life and Mission over-crossed the narrow space-time boundary and flooded the whole global region. Like the wave of light it surged many a dark corner of the human heart all over the world, like the fragrance of flowers his teachings spread all around. It is herein that the life and mission of an Avatara and the universal aspect of his message is distinctive.

It is this kind of universalism that he wanted to infuse in religious understanding so that the conflict between one religion and another may disappear altogether. This was not sheer eclecticism in the name of unity of religion, but the investigation for one common meeting ground for the different paths and religions. The emphasis and significance of his teaching lay on the identical 'end' of all the religions and paths viz. God realization, without any clamour about the superiority or inferiority of the various means i.e. *jnana, bhakti, karma* or *yoga*. Thus he found the real core of religion and its unity.

Another great message of Sri Ramakrishna lies in his claim that spirituality can be communicated in a sense much more intense than a flower is given to anybody. He proved this contention by winning over 'the great truculent advocates of modern thoughts' like Narendranath (Swami Vivekananda), about whom Monsieur Romain Rolland said: 'Thus at the feet of the simple Ramakrishna, the most intellectual, the most imperious, the most justly proud of all great religious spirits of modern India humbled himself.' The modern spirit, as it were, humbled itself at the feet of the ancient for the sake of spiritual illumination.

Sri Ramakrishna could not communicate personally this truth or spirituality to the world excepting a fortunate few. But he left true guide rules for spiritual practices for all. He asked all the aspirants to be earnest and pure. He warned them against the hidden rock of 'miracles' and the so-called magic of religion which tempt the average people and hinder their course of spiritual progress. He was the light-house shedding light on the unchartered ocean of spirituality. 'The life of Ramakrishna was an extraordinary searchlight under whose illumination one is able to really understand the whole scope of Hindu religion. He was the object lesson of all the theoretical knowledge given in the Shastras,' wrote Swami Vivekananda in one of his letters to Alasinga Perumal.

By his example Sri Ramakrishna taught mankind that bodily suffering did not stand between the Lord and the devotee. A lover of God transcended all the limitations of body and mind. It was a real disinterested love of God the same as Christ had.

Speaking about Sri Ramakrishna's last days at Cossipore Garden 'M' the writer of the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna says: 'At Cossipore Garden, he set himself with redoubled energy to the completion of the work of spiritual ministration he had begun long before at Dakshineswar. Realizing that the end of his physical life was approaching, he gave away his spiritual treasures without stint to one and all. He was like one of those fruit-sellers who

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bring their fruit to the market place, bargain at first about the prices, but then towards sunset, when the market is about to close, give away the fruit indiscriminately. Here his disciples saw the greatest manifestation of his spiritual powers. Here they saw the fulfilment of his prophecies about his own end : " I shall make the whole thing public before I go. " " When the people in large numbers come to know and whisper about the greatness of this body, then the Mother will take it back. " '

Actually some time after the Divine Mother took his body back into Her infinite folds when She saw that people have already come to know about the advent of Her spirit on the earth for the restoration of faith in religion. It was understood amongst the devotees at Cossipore that a nucleus of Sri Ramakrishna Sangha was taking shape to carry the message of the Master further into the world and also to sustain it.

Thus Sri Ramakrishna who in the language of Swami Vivekananda ' had in fifty years lived the five thousands years of national spiritual life and so raised himself to be an object lesson for future generations, ' and was ' the consummation of two thousand years of the spiritual life of three hundred million people,' fulfilled his great mission. Of course amidst the suffering and the oppressed millions his life is yet to sprout forth and grow into the banyan tree of peace and happiness. It is a happy augury that his power is working in that direction throughout the world.

SANATSUJATA'S INSTRUCTION TO DHRTARASHTRA

M. K. VENKATARAMA IYER

Among the philosophical discourses contained in the *Mahâbhârata* the most famous is, of course, the *Bhagavad Gita*. Sanatsujata's instruction to King Dhṛtaraṣṭra, known as Sanatsujâtiyam, is also a fairly important one since its teachings cover a wide ground and lay special stress on the ethical discipline that is necessary not only for understanding aright the doctrine of Brahman but also for realising it and transforming it into a felt, immediate conviction. At the beginning it is stated that the King met Sanatsujata in a lonely place and sought his instruction desiring to rise to that level (*brahma vidyayâ apahratamâtmânam labdhumicchan*). The importance of this philosophical disquisition is therefore both theoretical and practical. In fact, it is concerned more with the ethical aspect of self-realisation than with the metaphysical doctrine relating to Brahman. It no doubt gives a clear and succinct account of the Highest Reality as it is set forth in the classical Upanishads, but this is not its main theme. It deals with metaphysics only as the necessary presupposition and background of Ethics. It is hardly necessary to add that moral philosophy is rooted in metaphysics and takes its colour from the nature of the latter. In this respect *Sanatsujatiyam* falls in line with the general trend of Indian Philosophical speculation. Every system of thought, orthodox or unorthodox, is conceived in this country not merely as a stimulating intellectual exercise, but also as a way of life. Whether we study the Vedanta or Buddhism we find that theoretical exposition is followed by detailed practical guidance wherewith the aspirant can rise to the *summum bonum* of existence as understood in that system.

The Upanishads explicitly state that the *Atman* is to be ' seen ' and not merely heard or understood. *Ātma va arê dṛshṭavyaḥ* says sage Yajnavalkya. It is to be realised as an immediate and direct experience and not merely intellectually grasped. In the *Bhagavad Gita* the terms *jnâna* and *vijnâna* occur in three contexts and in all of them *jnâna* means intellectual conviction and *vijnâna* direct realisa-

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tion. Śankara explains the two terms as follows :

ज्ञानं शास्त्रोक्त पदार्थानां परिज्ञानं, विज्ञानं तु शास्त्रतो ज्ञातानां तथैव स्वानुभवकरणम् ॥ [1]

It is said in the *Mundaka Upanishad* that to know Brahman is to become Brahman (*sa yo ha vai tat paramambrahmaveda brahmaiva bhavati*). In his Sutra Bhasya Śankara also has stated that the culmination of Brahma-jnâna is its realisation as an immediate experience (*anubhavâvasânatvat brahma jnânasya*). The emphasis that *Sanatsujatiyam* places on this aspect of the question is therefore in consonance with the accepted tradition of this country.

Unhappy at the destruction in the impending Kurukshetra war, Dhṛtaraṣtra looked to Vidura for some consolation. Sorrow arises from delusion and the antidote for both is Brahma-jnana. *Tasya ko mohah kah shokaḥ ekatvamanupaśyataḥ* says the *Isa Upanishad*.[2] Narada, though he had mastered all the branches of knowledge that were extant in his days, still felt unhappy and betook himself to sage Sanatkumara for the saving knowledge which would enable him to cross the ocean of sorrow. In the initial chapters of *Yoga Vâsiṣta* we find that Sri Rama is depressed and grief-stricken and to help him rise above them Brahman-knowledge is imparted to him at great length with many illustrative stories by his family-preceptor Vasista. To show a great man somehow overpowered by sorrow and to seek to remove the cause of his unhappiness by imparting the highest knowledge is therefore an accepted method of introducing the Vedanta Philosophy. *Sanatsujatiyam* adopts the same method. Vidura directed the king to seek instruction from Sanatsujata, another name of Sanatkumara, one of the mind-born sons of Brahma, the others being Sanaka, Sanandana and Sanatana. The instruction is spread over four chapters comprising in all one hundred and forty-six verses. Sankara has written a most lucid commentary on this philosophical dialogue.

Faced with the forebodings of the death of his near and dear ones in the imminent battle, Dhṛtaraṣṭra's initial question naturally relates to the problem of death.

> 'O Sanatsujata, I have heard that it is your considered view that there is no such thing as death at all. Why then did the Devas (Indra) and the Asuras (Virocana) wait on Prajapati to obtain immortality ?' 'I wish to know the truth about this matter ; is there such a thing as death or no ?'

To the enquiring mind the phenomenon of death opens up vast avenues for reflection and provides an excellent occasion to dwell on the life of man on earth and the destiny that awaits him after physical dissolution. It will be remembered that it was a similar question raised by young Nachiketa that prompted Yama to expatiate on the doctrine of Brahman, the relation between the finite and the Infinite self and other allied topics. Sanatsujata said that Death did not devour a man like a tiger, that Yama was not visible to perception and that it was mere folly to imagine that he went about punishing evildoers. From the highest standpoint, which is the only correct and tenable standpoint, Brahman is the only reality and there is no second beside it. The only death is *pramâda* or the fall from our real nature and the identification with the physical body and sense-organs. *Pramâda* is therefore only another name for *avidya* which conceals our real nature from ourselves and causes us to cling to the non-self as if it were the real self. This is the worst folly and no other mistake is fraught with so much danger as this. 'The worst sinner,' says Sanatsujata, 'is the man who entertains wrong notions about the nature of the self' (I. 33) [3] 'A Brahmin loses his title

[1] Jnana, is to know intellectually what is said in the scriptures, whereas vijnana is the immediate experiencing of what is learnt from the scriptures.

[2] Where is grief, and where is infatuation, for him who sees oneness everywhere.

[3] The Roman and the Arabic figures given within brackets indicate the number of the chapter and the number of the verse, respectively.

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for Brahminhood if he holds wrong notions about the nature of his inmost self' (I. 32). *Pramâda* gives rise to several other undesirable qualities such as egoism (*āsyah*), desire (*kâma*), anger (*krodha*), delusion (*moha*) and so forth. There is close inter-relation between the initial folly and the rest which follow inevitably. *Pramâda* is therefore the parent-evil. If a man wants to overcome death he must refuse to fall a victim to this foundational error. If this is conquered all the rest, *kâma, krodha, lobha* and *moha* will automatically become powerless. The means of overcoming *pramâda* is not by performing the rites laid down in the Veda for there is no direct opposition between ignorance and *karma*. Rather they feed each other and develop into a vicious circle. *Avidya* leads to *kâma* and kama in its turn, leads to karma. The due performance of *nitya, naimittika* and other rites enjoined in the Veda does not take a man beyond the cycle of transmigration but keeps him closely tied to it. The only way of overcoming *pramāda* is therefore by acquiring *Ātmajnana*. Immortality is not a gift from above nor does one have to go to Kailasa, Vaikuntha or even Brahmaloka to attain it. All that one has to do is to tear off the veil that hides the real self and make it shine in its native splendour.

> 'The prana of the man who has realised his identity with the Supreme Self does not depart when he dies. He does not go elsewhere. He becomes Brahman here and now' (IV. 16). 'The *Atma-jnani* realises Brahman in his own inner self. Jnana is the direct road to *moksa* and not *karma*' (III. 22-23). 'Man has to separate the Atman from the five-fold sheath which envelops it. It requires much courage to do this work of uncovering the Self' (III. 6). 'Death disappears from the ken of the Brahman-knower. The man who is caught in the vortex of *samsara* is in the grip of death. The man who has awakened to the Self overcomes death by his knowledge' (I. 16).

What then is the nature of our real self? To discover this, all that we have to do is to disengage the self from everything that is adventitious to it and therefore in the nature of a superimposition on it. We have to adopt the process of elimination to strip the self bare of all its adjuncts. That which it can do without is an adventitious adjunct. The analysis of the states of waking, dream and profound sleep will show that the self will continue to shine even in the absence of the sense-organs, the mind and the *antahkarana*. In the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* we read :

> 'That it does not know in that state is because, although knowing then, it does not know ; for the knower's function of knowing can never be lost, because it is immortal. But there is not that second thing separate from it which it can know.'[4]

To acquire a particular knowledge of things the self no doubt requires the aid of material adjuncts like the sense-organs, the mind and the *antahkarana,* but it is a mistake to imagine that in the absence of these aids consciousness will lapse. It is like a lamp burning in a room. When there are men and things in the room the lamp reveals all of them. When the men have left the room and all the things are removed, the lamp will not go out, but will continue to shine. It will then show that there is nothing in the room. When we are in contact with the external world in the waking state, the objects that impinge on our sense-organs are illumined by consciousness manifested through the *antahkarana.* When we go to sleep and lose touch with the external world, the mind is active reproducing the things seen in the waking state in strange combinations. Consciousness, acting through the *antahkarana,* lights up these dream objects. In the state of profound sleep we do not have even dreams and hence nothing is presented to consciousness. It does not however get extinguished but continues to shine as is evident from the reminiscent experience of the next morning when we exclaim that we slept well and did not see anything. There is a fourth state known as the *turiya avastha* which is experienced in deep *samadhi.* In one of

[4] Br. Up. IV. iii. 30. Swami Madhavananda's translation.

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his minor poems[5] Sankara describes it as follows :

निषेधे कृते नेति नेतीति वाक्यैः
समाधिस्थितानां यदाभाति पूर्णम् ।
अवस्थात्रयातीतमद्वैतमेकं
परंब्रह्म नित्यं तदेवाहमस्मि ॥

'I am the supreme eternal Brahman which, when everything is negated, men in deep samadhi experience as the '*purna*', which transcends the three states, is non-dual and One.'

The *jiva* or finite self is a false creation arising out of *avidyâ*. 'If the spirit is extracted from the *jiva* which is a complex of spirit and matter, such spirit is "Purna". Yogins realise this in deep communion' (IV. 3). It is purna because there is nothing to limit it. We cannot conceive of one consciousness being limited by another. Nor can there be a material adjunct to limit it for, as we have seen, all these adjuncts may fall away and yet consciousness will continue to shine. It is therefore not anything different from Brahman who is also described as *Purna* in the *Upanishad*.

To this Brahman Sanatsujata makes a reference in the course of his instruction :

'The *vaiyakarani* is not the gerund-grinder but the man who knows how Brahman projects names and forms in a mysterious manner. Consequently, if we know Brahman we know everything else. There is no need to wander through all the worlds to become an all-knower.'
(II 49, 50).

This description raises the curiosity of Dhṛtarastra and, developing a genuine interest in the theme, he requests Sanatsujata to expound it further.

'O Sanatsujata, since you speak so well about Brahman of which we hear so little in the world, please instruct me in detail about the nature of the Supreme Being which, I am sure, will remove the cause of my misery.' (III. 1.)

Sanatsujata begins the instruction with the prefatory observation that the aspirant must bring a cool and composed mind to understand it and that, further, he must practise strict celibacy. For the theme relates to Brahman which is the highest reality, the highest truth and the highest value. '*Vedantasravana* is indispensable for acquiring right knowledge about Brahman.' (II. 51).

Being the highest and consequently the only reality, there is nothing else beside Brahman. It is beyond time, space and causality. It does not undergo any change or transformation. There is no urge without or within to compel it to go forth into the forms of finitude. The physical world and the finite selves are not therefore created by Brahman. They are only appearances projected by *Maya*. The yogins who are not under the sway of *Maya* are not deluded by the diversity of the world. Their intuitive vision enables them to experience the *Nirguna* Brahman as one with their inmost self. There is no question therefore of its being dismissed as something unreal merely because it is devoid of qualities. 'It is a presence felt everywhere "which is not to be easily put by"' (III. 22).

Such a reality is naturally beyond perception and inference. It is not within the range of any of the senses. It has neither form nor colour. It is not an object in relation to a subject. What is beyond perception is *ipso facto* beyond inference also. With the aid of the ordinary *pramanas* we can never come by the knowledge of Brahman. It is beyond mind and speech. It is utterly unclassifiable and indefinable.

'Even the Vedas can give no direct knowledge of Brahman. They are only pointers to Brahman in the same way in which the branch of a tree is a pointer to the moon on the first day after new moon.' (II. 44.)

It is Pure Consciousness and stands self-revealed. While it reveals everything else it does not stand in need of being revealed by anything else. Sun, moon and stars derive their light from this Supreme Light. In several places Sankara speaks of it as *chitsadânandâdvitiya brahma*.

[5] *Svarupanusandhanastakam*, V. 5.

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It has a lower form known as Saguna Brahman.

'The Lord has two forms — Saguna and Nirguna. By the former He projects the universe of names and forms, but the latter is His real form. The Vedas clearly state that His higher form is quite different from the lower which projects names and forms.' (II. 7.)

By way of illustration Sankara quotes four passages[6] from the Upanishads where there is the reference to the Saguna and Nirguna aspects of Brahman. The order in which the lower Brahman projects the universe is as follows : From Brahman arises Hiranyagarbha which, in turn, grows into Virat. From Virat arises the subtle element of water (*âpo tanmatra*) which must be taken as including the subtle elements of earth, fire and air. Akâsa stands on a different footing. From the *âpo tanmatra* originates water, the gross elements. This again is suggestive of all the other gross elements as well as the human body and bodies of other living beings.

'The Lord creates the world through His maya potency. There is authority in the Veda, to believe that He possesses such a potency' (I. 21) 'Vayu, Agni, Soma and Prana have their origin in Brahman and are finally absorbed in it. Brahman is the ultimate support of the universe. It is indeed all the worlds. It is the essence of glory. All beings come out of it and go back to it at the end. Earth and Heaven, Jiva and Iswara, the directions and everything else are pervaded by the luminous Being. Even if a man flew with the wings of a thousand birds he could not get at the beginning or the end of this Infinite Being. Even if he flew with the speed of the mind he could not reach the two extremities of this Supreme Being. It is so vast and unlimited. Its form is not within the range of human perception' (IV. 19-20).

Brahman-knowledge cannot be acquired in the way in which we acquire knowledge of other things. Just as mechanical aids are necessary to observe things which are too far away or too minute, even so man has to rise to a moral station from whose eminence alone he can study and grasp the facts of spiritual life. The Upanishads make it clear that the advent of Brahman-knowledge presupposes a high level of ethical perfection. A man must have cleansed his mind and heart of all their congenital vices like selfishness, egoism, arrogance and conceit and enriched them by the cultivation of virtues like straight-forwardness, truth-speaking, contentment and the giving of alms. Sanatsujata calls pointed attention to the important truth that without moral probity and strict celibacy Brahman-knowledge can never be acquired.

'The Brahman of which you seek instruction from me cannot be known by a man who is feverishly running after objects of sense. The desires and volitions of the mind must be completely laid to rest. He must withdraw his mind and senses from the senses and their objects. Strict celibacy must be observed. If these prior conditions are observed he can attain knowledge of Brahman' (III. 2. 3.) 'One becomes a *Muni* not by dwelling in forest solitudes but by making his mind quiescent. He who strives to reach the Imperishable must have attained mental composure' (II. 48).

The vices to be got rid off and the wicked men with whom we should not keep company are set forth in great detail in II. 15-18. It is needless to recount them here. The best way to extirpate the evil habits and tendencies is by cultivating their opposites. Mere negative resolutions will not do. Something

	Saguna	Nirguna
[6] Tait. Up. II. i and iv	*atmanah akasah sambhutah*	*yatovacho nivartante*
Chan. Up. VII. i. 1 and VII. xxiv. 1	*adhihi bhagava itiha upasasada naradah*	*yatra nanyatpasyati*
Brih. Up. II. iii. 1 and II. iii. 6	*dvevava brahmano rupe murtam chaivamurtancha*	*neti neti*
Brih. Up. II. v. 19	*indro mayabhih pururupa iyate*	*tadetad brahmapurvam anaparam*

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positively virtuous must take the place of the undesirable qualities which we wish to eradicate. 'One who wishes to overcome *kâma, krodha, lobha, moha* and *bhaya* can best do so by cultivating their opposites' (I. 15). This is what psychologists call 'the expulsive power of a new affection.' Patanjali's statement in his Yoga Sutra, *vitarka bâdhane prati paksha bhâvanam,* also emphasises the same truth. The virtues which are the antidotes to the vices that we seek to get rid of are stated in II. 19-23. They include, besides the cardinal virtues like non-violence, non-stealing, honesty, straightforwardness and so forth, certain rigorous disciplines like the renunciation of sense-pleasures, strict celibacy, tapas and the due performance of *Vedic karma.*

About sense-pleasures, their evil consequences and the need to renounce them Sanatsujata has a great deal to say. He reverts to this theme again and again, thus stressing the importance of the preliminary condition, that the aspirant for Brahman-knowledge should turn his back on the world and the pleasures that it can give. In a very subtle and imperceptible way man falls a victim to sense-enjoyment.

> 'Just as hunters find out the hide-out of wild animals and shoot them down when they are off their guard, even so these temptations find their way into our minds in our weaker moments and silently bring about our ruin.. Any one weakness such as *kama* or *krodha* can work sufficient havoc. What shall we say when all of them conspire together?' (II. 17) 'Like serpents which lie in hiding and bite a man when he is not sufficiently vigilant even so these senses come out of their covert through the organs such as the ear and lead him astray. He then tastes of the forbidden fruit and is caught in the cycle of transmigration.' (IV. 13) 'Man is first demoralised by his constant dwelling on the pleasures of the senses. Then he easily falls into the grip of *kama* and krodha. His ruin becomes complete when his reason gets clouded and when he loses his judgment.' (I. 11.)

When the craving for objects of pleasure becomes intense, man does not scruple to employ any means to secure them. When he has obtained them he falls head over ears in love with them. He feels utterly undone when he is separated from them. If he fails in his attempts to regain them he flies into a paroxysm of rage. These steps are successive. They exhibit the inevitable downfall of the man who comes under the sway of the senses. A similar statement of the gradual descent of man is to be found in the Bhagavad Gita II. 62-63.

A little reflection will serve to expose the hollowness of these pleasures. They are transient and, even if one goes to heaven, they are not likely to last long. We learn from the scriptures that a man is hurled down from heaven as soon as his merit is exhausted. If, by some chance, the pleasures last for a longer time than usual, even then they do not bring permanent satisfaction. Man never feels that he has had his fill of them. Sense-enjoyment is an appetite which grows by what it feeds on. Manu has well said that one can as well hope to quench a blazing fire by pouring ghee on it as to bring about the satisfaction of sense-desires by gratifying them as often as they arise. Man's vitality is completely sapped in the process. It is therefore mere madness to run after these so-called pleasures. Sanatsujata states all this in various contexts, sometimes explicitly, sometimes by implication.

He extols the virtue of strict celibacy in many contexts.

> 'He who is earnest about realising Brahman in his own inner self should renounce all quest for sense-pleasures and observe *brahmacharya* of a severe type. Renunciation of pleasures is the foremost condition for realising Brahman. Such renunciation will enable a man to rise to his true stature and realise Brahman in course of time.' (II. 46-47.) 'This Brahman about which you seek instruction from me can be known only by the man who practises strict celibacy.' (III. 2) Celibacy includes doing service to the teacher, doing obeisance to him, never crossing his wishes in the least, sitting at his feet and receiving the instruction and, at the end, making a handsome payment to him' (III. 8-12). 'The gods attained immortality through *brahmacharya*; sages attained

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their saintliness in the same way; the *gandharvas* acquired their charming personality by strict continence' (III. 15-16).

In the same strain the virtue of *tapas* is extolled by Sanatsujata. *Vedic karma* should be performed in a selfless manner and as an offering to God. The due performance of *nitya* and *naimittika karma* cleanses the *antahkarana* of its age-long impurities and prepares it for the advent of the saving knowledge. It is therefore an indirect aid to self-realisation. Sanatsujata devotes almost the whole of chapter two and many sections of the remaining three chapters to dwell upon the ethical aspect of the problem of self-realisation. *Sanatsujatiyam,* like the *Bhagavad Gita,* is, therefore, a predominantly ethical work. Metaphysics, of course, comes in incidentally, as it furnishes the ultimate support for any stem of morality.

Jnana is the direct means to *moksha.* It is acquired by receiving instruction from the teacher, reflecting on it, holding discussions with fellow-students and by the passage of time. The man who is set on the path of *jnana* does not feel called upon to perform *Vedic karmas* like *jyotiṣṭoma* and other sacrifices since he is not enamoured of even heavenly happiness. He treats both *dharma* and *adharma* alike since both lead to rebirth and transmigration. He does not allow the Veda to sit tight on him. He does not submit to the tyranny of the text. He knows that the letter often kills the spirit. He therefore feels at liberty to interpret the Veda in the light of his own plenary experience. In a stanza which is fully reminiscent of what is stated in the Bhagavad Gita, Sanatsujata says (IV. 25) : 'To the knower the Veda is of as little use as a well or a pond in a place surrounded by water on all sides.'

Brahman-knowledge is transformed by repeated meditation into Brahman-realisation. The realised soul is well established in *Satya.* His will and desires become infallible. He develops an attitude of indifference to praise and blame. He is not elated by the former nor dejected by the latter. He does not court publicity but is content to remain in obscurity, ever devoted to his own duties and promoting the welfare of his fellowmen. He shuns worldly prosperity. *Ahimsâ, satya, astêya* and *aparigraha* are his most valuable assets. His outlook is one of identity with all life. This is what is known as *sarvâtmabhâva.* The *Upanishads* contain many references to this ultimate state. It is described as the crowning experience of the Brahma-jnani. Sanatsujata claims that experience for himself in IV. 26-29 :

> 'I am your mother, your father and your sons. I am the Atman in everything. I am the ancestor of all the gods. All things have their origin in me. I rest in my own glory. I am not subject to old age, decay or death. I am of the nature of the non-dual Brahman.'

Such is the triumphant note on which the discourse concludes. A more appropriate ending cannot be thought of. Though primarily addressed to Dhṛtarashtra, *Sanatsujatiyam,* like the Bhagavad Gita, has a universal appeal. It invites all people to the experience of *sarvâtmabhâva* and undertakes to lead us, as if by holding the hand, step by step to that consummation.

What is the meaning of jnanayoga? It is the path by which a man can realize the true nature of his own Self; it is the awareness that Brahman alone is his true nature. Prahlada sometimes was aware of his identity with Brahman. And sometimes he would see that God was one and he another; at such times he would remain in the mood of bhakti.

Hanuman said, 'O Rama, sometimes I find that You are the whole and I a part, sometimes that You are the Master and I Your servant; but O, Roma, when I have the Knowledge of Reality, I see that You are I and I am You.'

—SRI RAMAKRISHNA

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA THE MYSTIC

MARY MUTHUSWAMY

If there is any land on this earth that can lay claim to be the blessed *Punya Bhumi,* to be the land to which all souls on this earth must come to account for *karma,* the land to which every soul wending its way Godward must come to attain its last home, the land where humanity has attained its highest towards gentleness, towards generosity, towards purity, towards calmness, above all the land of introspection and of spirituality — it is India. Her soil has been trodden by the feet of the greatest sages that ever lived. Here first arose the doctrines of the immortality of the soul, the existence of a supervising God, an immanent God in Nature and in man and here the highest ideals of religion and philosophy have attained their culminating points. In India, religious life forms the centre, the key-note of the whole music of national life. 'India is a Ganges of spirituality' said Romain Rolland. Out of this foundation of the old Vedantic faith of the great Advaitism, the deepest and purest expression of the ancient Spirit of India, arose one whose name ranks among the outstanding spiritual leaders who have appeared on the world stage, one in whom the world has recently witnessed the harmonious blending of the vast expansive heart of Buddha, the wonderful intellect of Sankara and the all-embracing love of Chaitanya — Swami Vivekananda.

Swami Vivekananda was born into this world as 'a living spirit of the Upanishads, the accomplishment of Indian sages, and the sage of the present day, of harmony'.

Before proceeding further we must first stop to consider what the word 'mystic' really means. 'A mystic is one who tries to grasp the divine essence or the ultimate reality of things, and enjoys the blessedness of actual communion with the Highest.' The thought that is most intensely present with the mystic is that of 'a supreme, all-pervading and indwelling power, in whom all things are one'. Hence the speculative utterances of the mystic seem to be always more or less pantheistic in character. On the practical side, a mystic always maintains the possibility of direct intercourse with this Being of Beings — intercourse not through any external media such as historical revelations, oracles, answers to prayers and the like, but by a series of transfusion and identification, in which the individual becomes in very truth, 'partaker of the Divine Nature'. To him God ceases to be an object and becomes an experience.

The whole life and doctrine of Swami Vivekananda proclaim him to be in conformity with the above definition of a mystic. Swami Vivekananda was, in a class by himself. He was of another order. He was not of this world, but had descended from another, from a higher sphere with a definite purpose. Material brilliance no longer deceived him. He saw the hidden tragedy, the weariness, the sorrows under the frivolous mask.

Like all great teachers of India, Swami Vivekananda did not profess to be the formulater of a new system. He interpreted India's religious consciousness. The spirit of India gave him a vision of the Universal religion.

In his search for God, Swami Vivekananda pointed out many truths which were unknown to the world hitherto. According to the evolutionists, Intelligence was the last to come in the order of creation. If that is so, then it must be the cause, says the great ascetic, of the beginning of creation also. In the beginning that intelligence remained involved and in the end it gets evolved. Hence the sum total of the intelligence displayed in the Universe must therefore be according to the Swamiji, the involved Universal intelligence unfolding itself, and that Universal is what we call God, from whom we come and to whom we return. 'God that eternally unknowable, or Absolute or Infinite or without name is the rationale, the only explanation of this present life'.

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Swami Vivekananda believed that there is only one Existence in the whole of this Universe and that One Existence, when seen through the senses is called the world, the world of matter. When it is seen through the mind, it is the world of thoughts and ideas and when it is seen as it is, it is called the One Infinite Being. There is only one Existence, and that One the Atman, the Self, when perceived through the senses, the sense imageries is called the body, when it is perceived through the thoughts, it is called the mind. So, it is not that there are three things, the body, the mind and the self, in one, but that they are all the Atman, the Self, sometimes called the Body, sometimes the mind and sometimes the Self, according to different visions.

Further, when that atman is realized, the purport of all the scriptures will be perceived as clearly as the fruit on the palm of one's hand. The intellect of the one who has not realized it, is one-sided. But the genius of the knower of Atman is all embracing. Swami Vivekananda strongly asserts that when the Atman manifests, science, philosophy and everything will be easily mastered.

In order to attain that realization in the conscious plane, some instrument is required. The mind is that instrument in us. It is a non-intelligent substance. It appears to be intelligent through the light of the Atman behind. 'The Shakti appears to be intelligent by the reflection of the intelligence, the Atman.' Hence the mind appears to be an intelligent substance to us. Therefore it is certain that man cannot come to know the Atman, the Essence of intelligence through the mind. He has to go beyond the mind. But beyond the mind there is no instrument — for Atman alone exists there — there the object of knowledge and the instrument of knowledge become one and the same. The knower, knowledge and the instrument of knowledge are thus the same.

But the real fact is that, there is a state beyond the conscious plane where the duality of the knower, knowledge and the instrument of knowledge does not exist. When the mind merges into it, that state is reached. Language cannot explain that state. Sri Sankaracharya has styled it as 'transcendental perception'. Even after that transcendental perception, *Avatars* descend to the relative plane and give out glimpses of that realization. The sum and substance of that says Swami Vivekananda is that 'You have only got to know that you are the Eternal Brahman.'

Man is already that, only the intervention of a non-intelligent mind, *upadhi,* is hiding knowledge. When the mind composed of subtle matter is quelled, then the Atman shines effulgent by its own radiance. One proof of the fact that mind or maya is illusion, is that the mind is a non-intelligent substance and the light from the Atman behind makes it appear intelligent. When one understands this, the mind will merge with the limitless ocean of intelligence and then it will be certain that 'The Atman is Brahman'.

The knowledge of Oneness, which the Śastras speak of as the realization of Brahman, is required to get rid of fears and the shackles of birth and death. Having once realized that Supreme Bliss, Swami Vivekananda was no longer overwhelmed with the pleasure and pain of this world. Men who are fettered by base lust and wealth can never enjoy that Supreme Bliss.

Very early in life, Swami Vivekananda sought after the essential thing — the realization of Truth. The more he advanced in the realization of the Atman, the less was he dependent on the observance of forms. Sri Sankaracharya had said : 'Where is there any ordinance or prohibition for him whose mind is above the play of the *gunas*'. Therefore the essential truth is realization. After realization, what we ordinarily call as work does not persist. It changes in character. The work of the Jnani only conduces to the welfare of the world. Whatever the man of realization, like this great ascetic, says or does only contributes to the well-being of all.

The sweeping strokes of the Swamiji's wild bird's wings took him, like Pascal, across the

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whole Heaven of thought, from one pole to the other, from the abyss of servitude to the gulf of freedom. 'Liberty' he said, 'was the sole condition of spiritual progress.'

'Maya is not,' said Swami Vivekananda, 'a theory for the explanation of the world. It is purely and simply a statement of facts. It is what we are and what we see.' We are placed in a world which can be reached only through the doubtful medium of the mind and senses. The world exists in relation to them. If they change, it will also change. The existence which we give to the world is not unknowable, immovable, absolute reality. It is an odd mixture of reality and appearances, of certainty and illusion. This is the condition of our knowledge. This world is Maya. Vendantic Advaitism of which Swami Vivekananda is one of the greatest modern representatives declared that Maya cannot be defined as Non-Existence, any more than it can be defined as Existence. It is an intermediate state between equally absolute being and non-being. It is not Existence, for the Hindu Vedantists says that it is the sport of the Absolute. It is not non-Existence for, that sport exists and no one can deny it. Hence it is the Relative. It is the sum total of experience.

To Swami Vivekananda there is no difference between Supreme Bhakti and Supreme Jnana. Supreme Bhakti is the realization of God in the form of *Prema* (Love) itself. This realization of love can never come so long as there is the least desire in the heart or the attachment to *kama-kanchana*. In the perfect realization of Love, even the consciousness of our bodies does not exist. Also Supreme Jnana is the realization of Oneness in everything, to see one's own self as the self in everything. This too can never come so long as there is the consciousness of ego. Realization of Love can come to none, unless one becomes a Jnani.

Swami Vivekananda then defined the nature of the soul. The soul is a Spirit. It is pure and perfect all the time, only its nature is more reflected in some minds than in others. The mind changes and as its character grows, as it were, more and more clearly it reflects the soul. Thus it goes on until the mind becomes so purified that it fully reflects the soul. Then the Soul gets liberated. That is the nature of the soul.

The mind according to Swami Vivekananda is a lake and every thought is a wave upon that lake. Just as the waves upon a lake rise and fall and then disappear, so also the thought waves rise and fall and then disappear, but they do not disappear for ever. They are continuously in the mind-stuff. They become finer and finer, but they are all there ready to start up at any moment, when they are required to do so. Memory is just calling back into wave-form some thoughts which have entered into that finer state of existence. Hence everything we thought, every action we have done is lodged in the mind. The soul clothed with these impressions, passes out when the man dies, and its destiny is guided by the resultant of all the forces represented by the different impressions.

There are three different goals to the soul. Those who have nearly attained perfection, and have only very little impurity remaining in them go to the *Brahma Loka* through the rays of the sun and there attain God-bodies. Those who were a middling sort of people, who have done some good here on this earth with the view of going to Heaven reach the Heavens in the Lunar sphere. But they have to become men again in order to perfect themselves. Those who were very wicked will become ghosts and demons and then become animals. They too will have to become men once again and then they get another chance to perfect themselves.

Swami Vivekananda has clearly explained the three states of our being. Practical psychology directs its energies in controlling the unconscious. Just as unconscious work is beneath consciousness, so also there is another work above consciousness. 'When that superconscious state is reached, man becomes free and divine, death becomes immortality, weakness becomes infinite power and iron bondage

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becomes Liberty. That is the goal, the infinite realm of the Super-conscious.'

The different processes involving emotional experience in spiritual life have been explicitly stated by Swami Vivekananda. 'Waves may roll,' said he, 'over the surface, and tempests may rage. But deep down there is the stratum of infinite Bliss.' It is during those moments of sorrow and visitation, when under the load of sorrow, dejection and despair, the whole world seems to be cut off from under the feet, and when the whole horizon seems to be nothing but an impenetrable sheet of misery and utter despair, that the internal eyes open, light suddenly flashes, the dream vanishes and intuitively we come face to face with the grandest mystery in nature — Existence. It is then that one sees the Absolute, the Infinite, the Ever-Blissful Existence, that One Infinite Being who is worshipped and called by different names in different climes. Then it is that the shackles which bind the human soul down to the hole of misery, break as it were for a time and unfettered it rises and rises until it reaches the throne of the Lord, 'Where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest'.

Swami Vivekananda was a mystic in the true sense. Nothing in this world ever daunted him. His sole aim in life was to serve mankind, but at the sametime he knew that he was serving God. It was only when his professor, Hastie delivered a lecture on Wordsworth and his 'intuition' and told his students to go and see Sri Ramakrishna who was the only living person whom he had seen leading the life of a mystic, that Vivekananda went and saw him. From the very day he associated himself with this Great Master Swami Vivekananda never failed to prove a worthy disciple of this outstanding spiritual leader. Swami Vivekananda whose original name was Narendranath Dutt is now the Patron of India. His mysticism had and is still having a strong influence on the people of our motherland. Why, not only of our country but throughout the whole world. His doctrine of the various things which pass man's understanding and his theory of Karma have been accepted by nearly all people.

Never for an instant was Swami Vivekananda's profound faith in the Advaita shaken. He attained the same pitch of Universal comprehension, where man is at the same time both the centre and the circumference, 'The totality of all souls and each individual soul', the starting point and the end of a double unending movement. Swami Vivekananda's constructive genius can be summed up in the two words — equilibrium and synthesis. He embraced all the paths of the spirit; the four yogas in their entirety, renunciation and service, art and science, religion and action from the most spiritual to the most practical. Each of the ways of Truth which he taught had its own limits, but he went through them all and made each of them his own. As in a quadriga he held the reins of the ways of Truth, and travelled along them all simultaneously towards unity. He was the personification of the harmony of all human energy.

Swami Vivekananda strongly believed that both good and evil were caused by God since everything that existed was that Being. This Infinite Being who was thus in every substance, penetrating through every individual was the Atman.

This great patron of India — Swami Vivekananda— only desired to re-awaken the spirit in man, 'to guide all nations and individuals to the conquest of their inner kingdom, by their own way best suited to them, by means corresponding best to the needs from which they suffer most.' Many a seeker after Truth, having a deeper knowledge of this great life may be helped to solve the problem of Existence, and having an entrêe into a world of richer spiritual insight may be inspired to follow his example and travel upon that same Path of Righteousness. Hence we too may rightly say with Sister Christine: 'Blessed is the country in which he was born, Blessed are they who lived on this earth at the same time and Blessed, thrice Blessed are the few who sat at his feet.'

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INDIA'S CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATION—V

V. N. SHARMA

Self Education

There were students whose longing was so intense and burning that they were not satisfied with rituals and other preliminary instructions given them by their teacher. They considered these preliminaries as non-essentials and unimportant. They asked, 'What is this world? How did it come into being? What law governs birth and death?' They forsook home and family and worldly life and retired to the hermitage of sages where they spent their time in studies and meditations seeking answers to these questions. Such ardent seekers had their own place in the frame of the ancient educational system.

Self-study (Swâdhyâya) was the best method enjoined by the *Upanishads* to such types of students who were mature for the enjoyment of Knowledge (*Tait. Up.* III). The idea behind this principle is that one could attain Infinite Knowledge, not by instruction but by meditation, and self-examination, even though instruction might help one to pave the way to unfold one's latent faculties.

> 'I have learnt, revered sir, the Vedas, the *angas,* their commentaries, and I have heard from my teacher the meaning of the *angas.* But in all of them I do not clearly perceive any way by which I could attain the highest knowledge and the highest good,' *

is the cry of the pupil whose latent faculties are aroused, who is impatient, who is discontented with the things he possesses. Naciketa in the *Katha Upanishad* also puts this question to Lord Yama. Yama tells Naciketa,

> 'This Atman can be attained not by speeches, not by intellectual understanding (medhaya), not by mere listening but by intense seeking. To such a seeker, the Self reveals itself in all its glory.'

Another *Upanishad* tells us that to a student in this state, every thing disappears but He only remains. Then he lives in harmony with everything. He might sing with his mouth, he might express gestures with his hands in tune with the melody but he is steady and his mind is in equipoise like the well-balanced pot on the head of a woman.

The teacher to whom the seeker approaches must be of that type who could lead him on this ancient path. Knowledge gained from such a teacher leads certainly to the goal (*Chand. Up.* IV. 9. 3.).

All possible methods of instructions ranging from memorising and mere getting by rote to self-education and self-evolution, from reason to dogma, intuition as well as induction we find in the ancient system of education. Every method was considered to have a peculiar and particular value in the education of the pupil, to suit his temperament and his peculiar evolvement. All these methods in the opinion of the ancient teachers have their value and significance and it is wrong to hold that one's own opinion was the only right point of view.

As we examine the different methods adopted in India, we see some of them are worth mentioning and many of the progressive educational institutions in the West are still afraid to touch upon them. Knowledge is vast and endless and to gain that and enjoy that each and every one must find his own method, his own way. It was the traditional usage in the ancient times — to make things easier and familiar — to express the ideas in the form of conversations and dialogues. The *Ramayana,* the *Mahabharata,* as well as the *Upanishads* have preserved for us many of these typical Indian methods of teaching. Questions, cross questions, and answers are a common feature in the *Upanishadic* teachings. So also, stories,

* *Parama Samhita,* quoted by Ramanuja in his *Sri Bhashya* pp. 562-563.

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parables, and illustrations, were told not only in the Vedic and later Hindu scriptures but in the Buddhist and Muslim systems of education as well. A spirit of enquiry and criticism was encouraged. In some ancient schools, to put questions was an obligatory duty of a student, a pre-condition for his studies (*Praśna Upanishad*). In all this, certain unwritten laws were in use and they were enjoined on all as a religious duty during their studentship. The traditional usages demand (1) an intense desire to listen to what takes place in one's presence (*śuṣrusha*), (2) a process of learning (*śravana*), (3) grasping all best things thus learnt (*grahana*), (4) assimilating the essentials thus grasped (*dhâraṇa*), (5) retention of the true and correct sense in all discussions thus taken place (*artha vijnâna*) (*Kandaka Niti Sastra*).

In other words we can say that the teacher in course of his talks, instructions and other activities sees that the pupil, follows closely what he is taught (*adhyayana*), apprehends the meaning, follows right reasoning leading to generalisation (*uha*), seeks confirmation by a friend or teacher and applies it in his own life. These are the five steps pointed out by the sages of old for the grasping and realisation of the text and the truth behind it (*Vachaspati Misra* II. p. 27). The fifth chapter of the Pratisakya of the *Rig Veda* gives us detailed information of this ancient method.

We see many informal discussions among the students in their rambles in the woods. This feature continued in later times as well. In some cases minute observations of facts were demanded (*Mahabharata*-Adi Parva Ch. 133). In all discussions, and debates teachers demanded a high standard of etiquette.

One of the students in a school in Banaras had always some foolish notions in his head and always said wrong things. The rest of the class could not tolerate this folly of his. The teacher was at pains to consider as to what method he could introduce for the education of such a pupil. He thought that the best way was to question the boy on his return from gathering firewood something about what he had seen and then ask him what it was like. "For" he considered "his mind will lead him on to making comparisons and giving reasons, the continuous practice of which on his part will enable me to impart learning to him" (*Jataka stories*. Quoted by Muzumdar p. 136).

The *Pancha Tantra* and *Hitopadesa* give us some special methods of teaching adopted in the case of those who had no interest in studies but inordinate liking for other things outside the sphere of education.

> 'Vishnu Sarma found this state of affairs with the princes of King Sudarsana of Pataliputra. So he told the princes that thenceforth they would do nothing but fly pigeons, feed them and look after them in the pigeon-house instead of taking up their daily studies. The princes were naturally very glad. As the number of pigeons increased they had to name and count them. Sharma was clever enough to put peculiar red marks on the wings of the birds and called them Ka, Kha, Ga etc. The princes thus learnt the letters of the alphabet and learned to join the letters into syllalables and syllables into words. The foundations of a knowledge of arithemetic was laid in counting the pigeons, in telling how many were in twos and threes in adjoining cots, how many remained in the cots after so many were on wing. By this strange method were taught not only notation, numeration, addition, subtraction etc., but also something of engineering and house-building and drawing which were required in planning and constructing the dove cots. Even ethics and politics were taught in this fashion'. (Annie Besant : *Higher Education in India.* Pp. 38, 39.)

In the method of instruction in literature and philosophy, the teacher enjoined on his pupils to attend the discussions of scholars arranged by princes in their courts, in different schools or in religious festivals.

In some cases they followed the time-honoured method to place before the pupil all possible points of arguments from the known to the obscure, from the simple to the complex and from the concrete to the abstract. This method we see in all dialogues and discussions preserved for us in the *Upanishads*. This method was recommended not only by the Hindu and Buddhist teachers but was fol-

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lowed even in Muslim schools. "Thus alone he may safely study other views after he has perfected his own nature" (Kimiya-us-ada, Ch. 6). All demanded consistency of aim and power of will in all debates. One must act up to, not merely read the scriptures, "for the mere reading of pharmaceutical works will not affect a patient's cure" (*Panchatantra* Ch. I).

As time went on there came a great change in the languages used in instructions, debates and discussions. Sanskrit was less used in the later times, particularly during the Buddhist Period. The latter gave a new impetus to the language spoken by the common folk of the land. The Buddhists made Pali as their official language. Buddha compelled every one to learn his doctrine in their own mother-tongue (*Cullavargga* V. 33. 1).

Gita condemns men who are merely steeped in scholarship and delight in disputations. These men are called "Men of florid eloquence", men who are seekers of pleasure, who barter away even spiritual life for material welfare (*Gita* II. 45). Discrimination and dispassion were stressed upon. "What need has a self-controlled man of the forest and what use is the forest to him without self-control. Where a man of self-control dwelleth, there the forest is," says the *Mahabharata* and that was the foundation on which our ancient educational system was built.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

The article 'Sri Ramakrishna — An example of the Highest Emotional Purity and Ethical Perfection' is a gist of the lecture delivered by Swami Vimalananda, President Sri Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, Kalady, Kerala State, on the occasion of the public celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's 127th birthday at Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras.

In the article 'Swami Sankarananda' we have attempted to give a short resume of the life of our late President which we hope will be of immense help and guidance in their lives to our readers.

Sankara it is popularly believed to be an intellectual giant, ever ready with his razor-sharp arguments to tear to pieces the opponent's views. But here in this article 'Sri Sankara and Krishna Bhakti' Sri Trivedi Krishnaji, has given a refreshing account of the softer or emotional side of Sri Sankara. The writer is an Advocate of Madras.

Swami Siddhinathananda of the Ramakrishna Order has shown in his article 'The Inevitable Choice' that the aim of life is not enjoying sense pleasures, nor amassing wealth but liberation, from the cycle of birth and death; that living the life of sense pleasures one cannot hope for liberation, and that giving up of the worldly enjoyments and one-pointed devotion to God by whatever name we may call Him is the only way for liberation.

Br. Sudhangsu of the Ramakrishna Order has given in brief as to what led to the Advent of the Supreme Godhead to incarnate on earth in the form of Sri Ramakrishna, in his article 'Advent of Sri Ramakrishna'.

Sanatsujatiyam forms a part of the Udyoga Parva of the *Mahabharata*. Sri M. K. Venkatarama Iyer, retired Professor of Philosophy, Annamalai University, Madras has in the article 'Sanatsujata's Instruction to Dhṛtarashtra' given a lucid exposition of the theme.

The article 'Swami Vivekananda the Mystic' by Miss Mary Muthuswamy, a student of the S.I.E.T. College is the essay that was

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awarded 1st Prize in the Essay Competition held in connection with Swami Vivekananda's 100th birthday celebrations.

India's Contribution to Education — V. is the last of the present series by Dr V. N. Sharma, Madras.

SHORTAGE OF COAL

The following news item in *The Hindu* of Tuesday 13th March, 1962 was of compelling attention. It said :

> 'The textile mills in Ahmedabad are facing a severe coal shortage here and if supplies of coal are not rushed to augment their one and half a day's stock with them, 62 mills would have no other option except to close. This will effect 1,30,000 workers.'

This is not a solitary instance when in recent months there has been this type of crisis. Sometime ago it was in Calcutta that the coal shortage threatened almost a breakdown of railway communications. Only the eleventh hour arrangements seem to have saved the situation. If our existing key industries and communications are to live continuously in fear of crises we shudder to think what will be the fate when other big industries too take the field according to the plans.

It is not known whether this shortage occurs because of lack of production in the country or lack of transport facilities or sluggishness and non-co-operation in transport. Recently it was reported that the Indian shipping concerns have demanded higher rates for transport of coal and that the Government was making frantic efforts to obtain assistance of the foreign shipping companies to enlist co-operation. It is not a good sign. Unless the Indian shipping companies are running at a loss they should make every effort to help the nation to tide over its difficulties. Present day situation is not so insular as not to effect other industries and life by a crisis in any part of the world in any sphere of life. The world has become so small that co-operation is needed in every walk of life. If, however, there is not enough production of coal in the country and sufficient import is not available then we should revise our plans of wholesale industrialization of the country or hold the plans in abeyance until fuel in sufficient quantity and in continuous supply is available.

Meanwhile we, the consumers, also should take stock of our position and revalue our ideas of the standards of living. A voluntary austerity drive on the part of every individual so as to make it possible for us to contain our requirements of food and cloth within that which is produced by us in our own country should be the chief aim. Other things can wait. There is no meaning in going on spending crores of our earned foreign exchange in importing machinery that cannot be fully utilized. India has not grown so rich as to squander away its wealth indiscriminately. If two pieces of cloth are sufficient for a man he should not waste his money in possessing a huge wardrobe full of clothes. And as far as possible it is in the interest of the moral standard of the nation that we should try to keep away the population of India, which is mostly agrarian, from coming in contact with the new type of demoralised living that prevail in the industrialized cities, by encouraging village industries and products. Leaders of the nation prior to their coming to power spoke highly of these but the glamour of industrial benefits must have revolutionized their views, for we do not find village industries being encouraged anywhere except as show-cases in cities or as models in a few villages. These industries should be popularised so that the country can face any crisis in any industry. Each village should be able to produce what it requires at least in food and clothing. Our land is not so barren as not to yield crops sufficient for our sustenance. The ideal of self-sufficiency may not be reached but the efforts will have their own invigorating and toning effect on the morale of the populace. Let us heed the times, see the writing on the wall and be wise before the event.

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END OF THE YEAR

The *Vedanta Kesari* has completed one more year of its service with this issue by the grace of the Lord. We thank all subscribers, advertisers, friends and contributors for their kind co-operation and hope to receive their continued support.

The reminiscences of Swami Akhandananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, under the title Alambazar Math ended with the March issue. The serial appearing on the 1st page 'From the Tree of Divine Lore' will end with this issue. The next issue being a special one may be delayed by a week or more and we request all our subscribers to bear with us for the delay. Efforts will be made to minimise the delay as far as possible.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

MY NON-VIOLENCE: By M. K. Gandhi. Compiled and Edited by S. K. Bandopadyaya. Pp. 373. Price Rs. 5. Navajivan Publishing House. Ahmedabad.

There can be no greater service to humanity at this juncture than incessant emphasis on non-violence; and there could have been no abler exponent of the doctrine than Mahatma Gandhi who had both preached it and practised it with success. This volume which contains all he said and wrote on the subject must therefore find its place in the shelf of every one in any part of the globe. For this doctrine like so many of his, has an eternal appeal, couched as it has been in the choicest English prose, reminiscent of the style of the gospel writers in Christian theology.

The cult of non-violence applied to the political sphere, is essentially a Gandhian concept or achievement. Nevertheless it is clear, as Gandhiji himself has explicitly summed up, that it had had its exemplars in the Hindu Rishis of yore; who had "discovered the law of non-violence in the midst of violence" and who were 'greater genuises than Newton and greater Warriors than Wellington'. 'Having themselves known the use of arms', he says, 'they realised their uselessness and taught that salvation lay only through non-violence' (P. 4). To him non-violence is complementary to 'truth and belief in God' (P. 14).

But the non-violence he stood for was far removed from cowardice (P. 107), because to him Cowardice and Ahimsa do not go together, any more than water and fire (*ibid*). 'A man fighting with his sword single-handed against a horde of dacoits armed to the teeth, is fighting non-violently'. A 'woman using a dagger to save her honour' is likewise so (P. 145).

Gandhiji was not so impracticable as to outlaw war especially when it becomes inevitable. Indeed at the time of communal frenzy in 1947, when violence was balanced on each side, he was of the view that though primarily there was a case for neutral agreement and arbitration; still when both failed, 'war had to be resorted to; if there was to be no escape from it'. (P. 335).

In fine, this is what one might call, an encyclopaedia of the Gandhian doctrine of non-violence. If anything, the excellent index justifies its claim to be regarded as such.

S. RAJAGOPALAN.

JAPA SUTRAM: By Swami Pratyagatmananda. (Pp. 79. Price Rs. 4.00. Ganesh & Co. Private Ltd., Madras-17).

India's unique heritage has been the 'mantra Sastra', or the science of sound, and the way in which it had been used in the past, to create, recreate, and annihilate, had been little short of the marvellous. The literature on the subject has however been scanty, but Swami Pratyagatmananda has tried to rescue it from oblivion. This treatise is a redaction of his original work in Samskrit and Bengali.

The author has given a vivid and fascinating picture of what 'Japa' as a Sadhana really is. It is a step which entitled one to reach the highest planes of realization, if one undergoes the necessary discipline in that behalf.

Mr. Justice P. B. Mukherji's scholarly and illuminating survey of the metaphysics of sound, correlates the theories in the realm of modern Physical sciences, with the technique of mantra sastra.

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A highly worthwhile publication, which should stimulate deep study and research on a subject which has so far been neglected.

S. RAJAGOPALAN.

THE SCIENCE OF YOGA: By I. K. Taimni. (Pub. Theosophical Publishing House, Madras. Pp. 446. Price Rs. 17.50).

Though the lines of Yoga are several, their starting points and processes varied, there are certain fundamental truths which underlie all Yoga. They are embedded in the tradition that has come down the ages from the Vedic dawns and the earliest treatise that we know of as recording this floating Wisdom is the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. The truths enunciated in these sutras enter into every path of Yoga in some form or other: they relate to the very being of man, his consciousness, his will and action. We have in the sumptuous volume before us a detailed and convincing exposition of these famous Sutras.

The author, Sri Taimni, is evidently a theosophist in outlook. But he has not allowed that system to colour too much his understanding of this ancient Sastra. He has effectively used his knowledge of the theosophical classification of the worlds, even as he has taken advantage of recent advances in modern sciences of the material and vital gradations of existence, to explain, justify and lay bare the occult principles that lie unsuspected and ununderstood below the cryptic phrasings of the master Yogin.

The full text of the Sutras is given in Sanskrit (Nagari script and also in transliteration in Roman) followed by the meaning of each word, free rendering into English and a systematic exposition which faces every problem squarely and traces the sequence from topic to topic. And this we can say of very few books indeed.

He touches upon several interesting and useful subjects in the course of his writing. The purpose of creation, the differences of approach to the question of the significance of life between Patanjali and the modern scientist, the role of the mantra and the rationale behind its use, the precise difference between Yoga and Sankhya, the possibilities of creating 'minds' (nirmana-kaya-manas) to work out unexhausted Karma etc., are some of the highlights that compel attention.

All told, this is a capital book which is going to exert a powerful influence on thinking minds for a correct appreciation of the potency of Yoga for the future development of man.

M. P. PANDIT.

MAHA YOGA OR THE UPANISHADIC LORE: By 'WHO' Sri Ramanashramam, Tiruvannamalai. Pages 235. Price Rs. 3.

The book under notice written in the light of the teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi, has emerged out in its fifth edition. As has been finely set out in the foreword by the author, Maha Yoga is the direct method of finding the Truth about ourselves, and it is a process of unlearning. Its follower has to unlearn all his knowledge which in its relativity would be a hindrance towards the quest of the true Self. The chapters are very well defined and they take us slowly from the query 'Are we happy' through Ignorance, Authority, the World, Soul, God etc., towards devotion wherein we realize the *summum bonum* of our existence here and hereafter. A book that furnishes everything of the realized teachings of Sage Sri Ramana it is very well worth acquiring and deep study.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

ABHEDANANDA ACADEMY JOURNAL: Puja Issue — 1961: Pub. Abhedananda Academy of Culture, 73, Ahiritola St., Calcutta-5. Pp. 92. Rs. 3.

This is a new publication of the Academy which claims 'to undertake a share in the efforts of solving some of the problems of research in Indology.' It has been mentioned in the introductory that 'It is brought out as an annual, but we have a mind to turn it into a quarterly magazine with the help of persons interested in the work of unveiling the mysteries of ancient civilizations'. No doubt this is a noble attempt to be welcomed by all those interested in the study of culture and civilization. Papers contributed by different scholars in this issue are not only informative but highly commendable. At the same time they are a bit technical and academic for all men to receive. If the sponsors want that the important ideas of our culture and civilization should spread amongst the masses instead of a few scholars and students who hold them in their laboured researches, the presentation should be more popular, interesting and attractive. The frontage of the journal is artistic. We wish it good-luck.

BR. SUDHANGSU

TAGORE: A MASTER SPIRIT: By K. Chandrasekharan. Pub. Triveni Publishers, Masulipatam. Pp. 164. Price Rs. 5.

The twelve essays of Sri Chandrasekharan collected in this volume throw a pleasing light

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on the many-sided personality of Rabindranath Tagore. As the author observes, Tagore was first and foremost a Poet and that too a poet in the real sense, a *kranta-darsi*, Seer, and also as the creator of an age in the world of letters. Discussing the complaint that there is too much of mysticism and symbolism in Tagore's poetry, Sri Chandrasekharan writes: 'Mysticism is no synonym for mistiness or confusion in thought. Mysticism in simple connotation is one's own consciousness of God behind all things in the world and behind all experiences in man. Certainly many a poet born in India has in his make-up the mysticism of which we have only clearer evidences in Tagore.' And he proceeds to give the background of Tagore's mind and soul in the traditions of the Vaishnavas like Vidyapati, Chandidas and the Bauls.

What makes these essays delightful to read is that their author is not a mere admirer of the poet. He is a sensitive critic and refined connoisseur too — as will be evident to anyone reading the chapters on Kalidasa and Tagore, the poet's mind etc. Tagore's genius in the discovery and portrayal of the workings of the child-mind is another topic of interest.

The book carries a brilliant Foreword by Dr K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar which not only sets the proper background for a full appreciation of the contents but also gives, as it were, a thread of unity to the diverse essays written over a period of three decades.

M. P. PANDIT

ADVAITA BODHA DEEPIKA: Pp. 119. Price Rs. 1.50. The Manager, Sri Ramanashramam P.O., Tiruvannamalai, South India.

This is an extremely valuable treatise on Brahma Vidya, and may rightly be termed a source book of the Advaita school of philosophy, being itself based on the original Sanskrit work Sri Advaita Bodha Dipaka of Sri Karapatra Swami. The book had been commended very highly by Bhagavan Sri Ramana Mahrshi, and the translation itself had been revised by him. It is in the form of a conversation between a master and his disciple. That however is not a handicap because even a lay reader is enabled to get a clear idea of what 'TAT TWAMASI' means and imports. The concluding words perhaps aptly sum up the result of the discipline enjoined on the aspirants 'Never think of anything but Brahman. Always think of Brahman. In this way all worldly thoughts will vanish, and thought of Brahman alone will remain. When this becomes steady forget even this and without thinking I am Brahman, be the very Brahman. Cease thinking of anything but Brahman. By this practice, your mind will be extinct. You will forget all and remain as Pure Brahman. 'Tat Twam Asi'. (P. 115).

S. RAJAGOPALAN

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE NEW PRESIDENT OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND MISSION

His Holiness Srimat Swami Vishuddhanandaji Maharaj who was the Vice-President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission from 1947 was elected the President of the Order on 6th March 1962, in place of His Holiness Srimat Swami Sankaranandaji Maharaj who passed away on 13th January 1962.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH, MADRAS

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

The 127th birthday Tithipuja of Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna was observed on Thursday, the 8th March, 1962. The day started with group meditation followed by Mangalarati in the shrine at 5 a.m. After devotional songs and chanting of select portions of the Gita and the Upanishads by students of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, the worship in the shrine started at 8 a.m. and came to a close at 1-15 p.m. after the homa was performed. The Chandi, Gita and stotras were also chanted. About 1,100 devotees and 700 Daridranarayanas were served with food prasad. After the evening service in the Shrine extracts from *Thus Spake Sri Ramakrishna* were read. The gathering was then addressed by some Senior Swamijis.

The Public function came off on Sunday, the 11th March. The silent reading of the Life and Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna commenced at 8-30 a.m. and terminated at 10-30 a.m. About 100 devotees participated in the function.

There was Harikatha Kalakshepam by Sangeeta Vidwan Mannargudi Sambasiva Bhagavatar

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on Bhakta Purandaradasa from 3 to 5 p.m. The public meeting started with an opening song and Vedic chanting. Dr. A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar took the chair. Swami Kailashananda welcomed the President of the meeting and other speakers as also the gathering. Prof. Satyanarayanamurti, Swami Vimalananda and Sri M. P. Sivagnana Gramani spoke in Telugu, English and Tamil respectively. After the President's speech there was recitation by the first prize winners in the Inter-School competitions. Prizes were then distributed. Prof. A. L. Krishnan proposed a vote of thanks.

Speaking on the occasion Sri M. P. Sivagnana Gramani extolled Sri Ramakrishna's pure and divine life, which he said was a rare phenomenon in the present age. Dr A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar in his presidential speech said, 'India, if it loses its spirituality, loses everything. We have not yet realized that greatness consists not in the external paraphernalia but in the inner spirit which tells us exactly what is to be done and, today, therefore, more than ever, the spirit of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa should descend to us.'

At the close of the meeting there was Arati in the Shrine followed by Bhajana by the Ramakrishna Math Bhajan party led by Swami Priyananda.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA - VIVEKANANDA BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Sarojini Nagar and Adjoining Areas New Delhi

The 127th Birthday of Sri Ramakrishna and the 100th Birthday of Swami Vivekananda were celebrated at Sarojini Nagar (Main Vinay Nagar) on February 25 and March 3, 1962. On the first day there were recitation competitions in English, Hindi, Sanskrit, Bengali, Punjabi and Tamil. About 500 students from different schools participated, 59 prizes were awarded.

On the 2nd day (March 3) there was a Public meeting, presided over by Swami Ranganathanandaji, Head of the Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi. Sri Ram Chandra Tiwari spoke in Hindi while Shri Tarapada Chowdhary spoke in Bengali. Students who secured the highest place in the recitation competitions recitated messages of Swami Vivekananda in various languages.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, SINGAPORE

Report for 1959 and 1960

The Singapore Centre of the Mission runs a Boys' Home and a Library and Reading Room. The Boys' Home had 50 and 57 inmates in 19 and 1960 respectively. They were either orphan or very poor boys. The Library had 4,252 book in 1959, 1,342 books were issued to the members In 1960, 101 books were added ; 1,236 were issued to members and 1,660 persons utilised the Library and Reading Room.

Cultural: Weekly scriptural classes were conducted. Towards the end of 1959 and again in 1960 Swami Siddhatmanandaji, head of the Centre, delivered lectures in Singapore, Malaya, S. Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand under the auspices of several institutions. Birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Krishna were observed at the Centre.

Educational: The Vivekananda Tamil School and the Sarada Devi Tamil School had 147 and 157 students on their rolls in 1959, and in 19 the number was 154 and 164 respectively. There were night classes for adults in which the attendance was 60 and 54 in 1959 and 1960 respectively.

The Advisory Committee thanks the members, donors, subscribers and well-wishers for their support. It also appeals to the generous-hearted persons to render all possible help and donate liberally to wipe off the deficit of $15,000, and to complete the future plans.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SOCIETY, RANGOON

Report for 1960

The Ramakrishna Mission Society runs a Free Library with a collection of 30,670 books and a Free Reading Room which receives 29 dailies and 125 periodicals. The Reading Room has an average attendance of 350 daily. 153 scriptural classes were held in the year with an average attendance of 20. Thrice a week Burmese Language class was also conducted by an experienced Burmese teacher. A Cultural Study Group organised several discussions on cultural and religious subjects. Birthdays of the prophets of diverse faiths and festivals of different religions were celebrated. The Society conducted 47 public lectures, 22 cultural film shows and 6 musical evenings. The Society is doing some publication work also. The Managing Committee of the Society express their heartfelt thanks to their numerous friends, well-wishers, supporters, devotees, subscribers and donors and appeal for funds for the maintenance and expansion of the activities of the Society.

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